

# SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES

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## THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE *GÍSLA* SAGA

TAYLOR CULBERT

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THE modern reader of the Icelandic Family Sagas, conditioned as he undoubtedly is by the customs and conventions of twentieth-century novelists and short-story writers, may, when he first approaches the sagas, be troubled by the somewhat different techniques and practices of the authors of these medieval narratives. In some tales he may be alienated by the extensive genealogies that precede the main action, and in others bewildered by the multiplicity of apparently irrelevant episodes, all, or so he feels, involving several Thorgrims, Thorkels, Thorbjorns, and Thorolfs. At first acquaintance, only a few sagas satisfy the expectations of the most demanding modern reader. Among these, the *Gísla saga* is pre-eminent.

Of all the Icelandic Family Sagas, none has been commended more highly for its design than the story of Gísli. W. P. Ker, for example, speaks of "the definite structure of those [sagas] in which all the particulars contribute to the main action,"<sup>1</sup> and places the *Gísla saga* in this group. He also states that the biography of Gísli is handled "in such a way that the story produces one single impressive and tragical effect, leaving the mind with a sense of definite and necessary movement towards a tragic conclusion."<sup>2</sup> G. Turville-Petre mentions the "conscious artistry" and "constructive power"<sup>3</sup> displayed by the author. E. E. Kellett asserts that "in some of the smaller tales, like *Gisli*, *Hen-Thorir*, *Bandamanna*, there is a perfection of unifying art worthy of Ben Jonson or Fielding."<sup>4</sup> And Bertha S. Phillpotts refers to "a certain symmetry of design" as a notable feature of this tale.<sup>5</sup> If the *Gísla saga* actually measures up to this high praise, it would

<sup>1</sup> *Epic and Romance* (London, 1897), 214.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 224.

<sup>3</sup> *Origins of Icelandic Literature* (Oxford, 1953), 244.

<sup>4</sup> *The Northern Saga* (London, 1929), 68.

<sup>5</sup> *Edda and Saga* (London, 1931), 193.

appear to be well worth the effort to discover precisely how it is constructed, how its component parts are fitted together and unified, so that we may acquire a better understanding and appreciation of the methods by which the author has achieved such impressive results. Consequently, this one aspect of the story, its structure, will be examined in this paper.

It is obvious that the *Gísla saga* gains an easy though superficial unity as a result of its biographical form—the product of its concentration upon the events that befall one person.<sup>6</sup> But that alone would scarcely account for the high praise accorded its structure. The biographical form, of course, does afford the author some control over his materials. Other sagas, *Egils saga*, *Harðar saga*, and *Víga-Glúms saga*, for example, are built upon the life of a central figure; yet the design of these tales has not received such acclaim as has that of the *Gísla saga*. The makers of several sagas limited and unified their materials by depicting only one series of closely connected events, perhaps the course of a single blood-feud, a method adopted for instance by the narrators of *Hrafnkels saga* and *Thorsteins saga stangarhöggs*. In such cases, the actions of the main characters both before and after the central feud were largely ignored; and the feud itself gave shape to the story and established its structure almost automatically. But the teller of the *Gísla saga* faced a knottier problem. He sought not only to treat the hero's entire life—he began in fact with the protagonist's ancestors and concluded the narrative with events following from his death—but also to organize these data more tightly than was required by the chronological order of the usual biography. How then could he shape such refractory materials to the evident satisfaction of modern readers?

We can discover the principles and concepts that underlie the final form of the story, perhaps, by searching for the criteria by which the narrator selected the episodes he should include and determined the point of view he should adopt for their presentation.<sup>7</sup> A thorough

<sup>6</sup> Turville-Petre, 244, states that "the *Gísla Saga* is not, like the *Eyrbyggja Saga* the history of a district, or even of a family. Like the *Víga-Glúms Saga* and the *Hallfreðar Saga*, it is the biography of a single hero, whose life-story is told from beginning to end."

<sup>7</sup> *Narrator* and *author* are used in the singular to designate the person whose skill and vision established the basic shape of the story, though of course it may have been the product of many hands.

examination of the saga leads us to believe that the author made use of three distinct schemes for controlling his raw materials. First and most obviously, he was guided by his intention to describe the life of the outlaw-hero: all his data pertained directly or indirectly to Gísli. Second, he seems to have selected from the various events of Gísli's life those that were integral parts of three main conflicts. He developed a conflict (1) between Gísli and Þorkr, a quarrel arising from the obligations of blood-vengeance. In addition, he exploited a more general struggle (2) between Gísli and the society that outlawed him. And finally, he saw in Gísli's life a continuing battle (3) between the hero and his inimical fate. By intertwining these three conflicts and by terminating all of them in one climactic event, the author was able to fuse them more than adequately. For the third major means of control, the story-teller relied upon various motifs. He alluded at crucial points to the sword *Grásíða*, handling its appearances in the story in such a way that it becomes a rather prominent motif. And he also stressed the similar predicaments in which Þórdís, Þorkell, and Gísli found themselves as a result of the conflicting demands of kinship and vengeance. By reference to all these narrative devices, the construction of the *Gísla saga* can be discussed and the artistry of the narrator at least partially revealed.

Strictly speaking, the *Gísla saga* is not a biography, though it may be said to be fundamentally biographical. Enough of the hero's life is reported to permit the reader to form a vivid and detailed conception of his whole character. But, on the other hand, several years of his life are referred to only in summary fashion or are passed over altogether. For example, concerning Gísli's activities immediately after he is made an outlaw, we are told only that he remained for three years at Geirþjófsfjörðr and that thereafter he traveled about the island for an equal period of time seeking aid from men of high rank.<sup>8</sup> Yet the biographical orientation of the narrative does lead to certain significant results. The concentration of the tale upon one individual provides a constant focus or center for the reader's attention and thereby creates one kind of unity; and the chronological order inherent in any biography confers a simple but effective organization upon the events

<sup>8</sup> *Gísla Saga Súrssonar*, ed. Finnur Jónsson, in *Allnordische Saga-Bibliothek*, ed. Gustaf Cederschiöld, Hugo Gering, and Eugen Mogk, X (Halle, 1903), 55. Subsequent references are to pages in this edition.

depicted. Gísli himself appears in all the noteworthy actions of the story with the exception of a few incidents taking place in Norway before his birth and a brief episode or two after his death. The tale actually begins with the recital of certain exploits of Þorbjörn and Gísli, the father and uncle respectively of the hero (1-4). Inclusion of this introductory material may be defended on several grounds: though not pertaining directly to the protagonist, it does explain how Þorbjörn came to marry Þóra, Gísli's mother, and, more important, how the sword Grásíða, which figures so prominently in the outlaw's affairs, came into the hands of his family. In addition, we must understand that these opening passages, because they contain a great deal of genealogical information, were justified in the opinion of medieval, if not of modern, readers by their specific identification of the hero of the story about to be told, by their allusions to the deeds of the famous men who settled the island, and by the outright history of the Icelandic community that they related. The short section at the very end of the saga (98-100) is equally defensible in that it describes the abortive attempt by Gísli's sister to avenge his death, an act which Icelanders would have regarded as a most essential part of any history of Gísli and which the twentieth-century reader can think of as relevant if he will accept the story on its own terms and make allowances for the somewhat different ethos prevailing in Iceland during saga times. Whereas the biographical design does explain the presence of most details that have been portrayed in the story, it does not explain the many events of Gísli's life that the author has chosen to exclude. And to understand the reasons for their absence, we shall have to turn to the other organizing principles that guided the story-teller.

The three major conflicts—between Gísli and Þorkr, between Gísli and society as a whole, and between Gísli and fate—do more toward fixing the structure of the saga than does the biographical form. Not only is Gísli a principal actor in each conflict but all three are decisively resolved by one combat, several episodes are organic to more than one conflict, and all the conflicts run concurrently throughout the bulk of the narrative. They afford the author a basis for selection, for deciding which biographical details to report in his story and which to pass over: only those that were connected in some way with these conflicts should be reported. This seems to have

been his basic strategy in shaping his narrative.

The struggle between Gísli and Borkr is a conventional blood-feud arising from a slaying and the consequent duty that falls upon the kinsmen and friends of the slain man to seek vengeance. Very briefly, the feud developed from the slaying of Vésteinn, Gísli's sworn-brother, by Þorgrímr. Although the killing was done surreptitiously, Gísli was able to identify the killer by recognizing the spear that was left behind in Vésteinn's wound. By withdrawing the murder weapon from the dead man, Gísli obligated himself according to the prevailing customs of the Icelandic community to avenge Vésteinn. He discharged his responsibility by slaying Þorgrímr with the same weapon, and Borkr drew the spear from Þorgrím's body, thereby incurring the duty of avenging him. Some time later, in a fit of pique, Gísli disclosed to his sister, Þorgrím's widow but now Bork's wife, that he was the killer; and she rather reluctantly betrayed him to Borkr. Knowing that he must seek satisfaction from Gísli, Borkr first arranged to have him outlawed and then hired Eyjólftr to kill him. It is true that Eyjólftr and his helper, Njósнар-Helgi, actually pursued Gísli while Borkr personally took few steps against him; but nevertheless Borkr must be held responsible for the intervention and the activities of the other two, and the burden of the feud rested squarely upon his shoulders.

Bork's persecution of Gísli, made up of many separate but related incidents, supplies the main action of the story; and it has been so contrived that the gradual yet inexorable pursuit of the outlaw is both exciting and artistic. On one occasion, at the cost of his thrall's life and a wound in his own leg, Gísli escaped from Borkr and a large group of his henchmen by disguising himself in the thrall's clothes (50-52). On another occasion, Njósнар-Helgi discovered Gísli's whereabouts, but by the time he returned with some men, the outlaw had vanished and the trip proved to be fruitless (55-56). Once again, Njósнар-Helgi located the fugitive in his hiding-place near Geirþjófsfjörðr, but, as before, when Eyjólftr and his companions reached the spot, Gísli was not to be found (59-60). Later, rumors came to Eyjólftr that Gísli was living at Hergilsey with Ingjaldr. On orders from Eyjólftr, Helgi visited there and learned that Ingjaldr was indeed sheltering Gísli. He reported these tidings to Borkr who set out

with fourteen men to kill Gísli. As Þorkr and his men neared the island on which Gísli was hiding, Gísli and his host were fishing. By posing as Ingjald's fool, Gísli rowed right under Þorkr's nose and reached the mainland before Þorkr saw through the deception and could overtake him. Þorkr was so close upon Gísli's heels, however, that he succeeded in wounding him in the leg. Eventually, Gísli eluded his pursuers through the help of Refr and his wife Alfdís who concealed him and put Þorkr off his trail (64-73). Urged on by the dishonor that came to him as a result of his inability to cope with Gísli, Þorkr sent Njósnar-Helgi again to Geirþjófsfjörðr to find the hero. The agent spied a fire that he believed to be the outlaw's and, in order to obtain a better view of it, erected a huge pile of rocks. In the night, Hávarðr,<sup>9</sup> Helgi's companion, carried away every stone and then tricked Helgi into running from the spot in panic. As a result, when Eyjólf and his comrades arrived, they could not locate Gísli and were compelled to depart empty-handed (81-86). Finally, by following the tracks of Auðr, Guðríðr, and Gísli in the dew, Eyjólf and his men were able to meet Gísli and force a decisive fight (94-98). To the feud and to its many narrow escapes, this combat in which Gísli singlehandedly battled his foes comes as a fitting climax. Although Gísli was extraordinarily successful in evading his enemies through his mental and physical agility, it becomes quite plain that the odds against him are so great that it is merely a matter of time until he will be cornered and driven to contend with the overwhelming strength of Þorkr's party. Not only are the many incidents in this feud dramatic and exciting in their own right but they also prepare the reader for the inevitable conclusion as the hunters get closer and closer to their quarry. The feud as a whole, moreover, furnishes the means for shaping a considerable portion of the narrative.

The second major conflict that orders the materials of this story pits Gísli against not one specific individual but society as a whole. After Gísli revealed himself as the slayer of Þorgrímr, Þorkr instituted

<sup>9</sup> No motive is ascribed to Hávarðr for this action that proves to be so very helpful to Gísli. We do possess one bit of information about him, however, that may be significant: he came out to Iceland from the mainland during the summer before this incident occurred (81), and for that reason may have been exempt from Þorgrímr nef's curse. Hávarðr later aids Auðr (84-85), though again his motivation is not apparent.

a suit against him by reciting the required legal formula at Gísli's house at Hóll (52). In spite of the efforts of Gísli's kinsmen to arrange a settlement, a verdict of outlawry was rendered against him (53). As an outcast, Gísli seems to have been the victim of a contradiction in the ethos of his society: on the one hand society demanded that he avenge Vésteinn by killing Þorgrímr and on the other it outlawed him for carrying out that vengeance. If the law dealt satisfactorily with vengeance or if vengeance were left completely to the individual, no problem would arise. But when the legal agency and the demand for private vengeance existed together, the individual might be ground between them; and this was Gísli's misfortune.

Inasmuch as Þorkr was instrumental in obtaining the judgment of outlawry against Gísli, his persecution, which was carried on by several agents, represents not merely personal vengeance but also the official pursuit of its enemy by society. The verdict of the Thing, in other words, sanctioned Þorkr's private actions and, in effect, publicly commissioned him to hunt down Gísli on behalf of the entire community. Evidence of Gísli's status as an outcast is seen in his inability to obtain aid from any source. Normally he could appeal to friends and kinsmen for protection and perhaps legal support, but, because of the curse pronounced by Þorgrímr *nef*, the chief men were unwilling to help him; and even when they were not openly opposed to him, some mishap frustrated their good intentions (55). Even his brother Þorkell was alienated and, because of previous differences with Gísli and loyalty to Þorgrímr (49), gave only limited assistance (54-55, 63). From time to time, Gísli did receive shelter from various persons but was inevitably discovered by his foes and forced to move on. Gísli himself summed up his precarious position outside society by asserting to his brother: "*vera vinr margra hofðingja, ok uggir nú ekki at þér; en ek em sekr, ok hefi ek mikinn fjandskap margra manna*" (64). 'You are the friend of many influential men, and you now have nothing to fear; but I am outlawed, and I have the great hostility of many men.'<sup>10</sup>

In addition to the official sanction given by the Thing to Þorkr's hunting of Gísli, the employment of Eyjólf and Njósnar-Helgi to prosecute the feud lends a public and somewhat impersonal tone to

<sup>10</sup> This and the other translations are mine.



the whole affair, taking it out of the class of a purely personal grudge and turning it into a quasi-communal effort. Furthermore, as one of the chief men of the district, Þorkr was able to dispatch many men against Gísli, another fact that suggests that society itself was aligned against the outcast. At the end, even Auðr, who had stood by Gísli throughout his outlawry, was forcibly prevented from aiding him (95). His complete isolation from society is dramatized during his last battle by his defensive position atop the crag Einhamarr, the spire-like peak of the mountain to which he was driven, where he was surrounded by enemies yet set apart from them by his elevation (96-97). This one scene strikes the reader as a most accurate epitome of Gísli's lonely plight. Because the actions of his assailants have been invested with a significance beyond the strictly personal, the combat that brings death to the hero appears to be the direct product of his conflict with the community and in addition the means of resolving that struggle.

The third conflict that shapes and controls the form of the story involves Gísli and his doom. In a struggle of this kind, the antagonist necessarily remains invisible, though supremely powerful, and in order to be depicted at all must be represented by various real and comprehensible agencies that are made to seem to act on behalf of this inscrutable force. One guise under which fate appears in this saga is the formal curse. Following the slaying of Þorgrímr, Þorkr prevailed upon Þorgrímr nef to pronounce a spell against the slayer to the effect that "at þeim manni yrði ekki at björg, er Þorgrím hefði vegit, þó at menn vildi duga hánun ok hann megi sér hvergi ró eiga á landi" (43). 'To that man who had slain Thorgrim should come no help, even though men wished to aid him, and that he might nowhere in the land be able to procure rest for himself.' Although the curse did not specify its victim by name, the reader knows that it was directed against Gísli and that as a consequence he would find himself struggling against this supernatural power as well as against ordinary human opponents. Throughout the remainder of the tale, this conflict between Gísli and fate controls and orders, to some extent, all the events of his life.

From Þorkr's point of view, the spell worked out admirably. Gísli's situation became more and more desperate as his foes closed in on him and as he failed to enlist help from any source. Naturally, he appealed to his brother Þorkell, but little help was forthcoming;



Þorkell said that he would warn him if men wished to kill him but that he would render no active aid that might bring trouble upon himself (49). In spite of Gísli's repeated appeals to him, he continued to give much the same reply on each occasion (49-50, 54-55, 60, 63-64). Furthermore, Gísli's kinsmen undertook to handle his case at the Thing but their help was of no avail; indeed it was absolutely worthless (53-54). Attempts to procure aid from the chief men of Iceland were equally futile: "En sakir þess tröllskapar, er Þorgrímr nef hafði haft í seiðinum, ok atkvæða, þá verðr þess eigi auðit, at hofðingjar tæki við hánun, ok þó at stundum þœtti þeim eigi svá ólíkliga horfa, þá bar þó alstaðar nokkut við" (55). 'But on account of the witchery that Thorgrim Nose had used in the incantation and on account of the spell itself, it came about that this was not to be, that the chief men should welcome him. And although at times it seemed to them that matters did not look so unpromising, yet something always stopped them from helping him.' Of course, from his faithful wife Auðr, Gísli obtained real aid. Ironically, however, her support in the end worked against his best interests, for by her well-meant intervention during his final fight she prevented him from dealing a death-blow to Eyjólfur. Gísli told her that "En minna lið veittir þú mér nú, en þú myndir vilja eða þú ætlaðir, þó at tilræðit væri gott, því at eina leið myndi þeir nú hafa farit báðir" (95). 'But now you give me less help than you wished or intended to give, though your courage was commendable, because by now they both might have gone down the same road.'

Owing to an oversight in the wording of the curse, Gísli did receive some aid from persons not living on the mainland. Ingjaldr, whose house was on Hergilsey, was not included within the scope of the original spell, with the result that "ok er þeir hittaz, býðr hann Gísla allan greiða ok alla björg, þá er hann mátti hánun veita" (64). 'And when they met, he offered Gísli all the shelter and all the help that he had the ability to give him.' The narrator makes clear that this is the proper explanation of Ingjaldr's help by informing the reader that "ok þat hafa menn mælt, at Ingjaldr hafi Gísla mest veitt, ok þat at mestu gagni orðit; ok þat er sagt, at þá er Þorgrímr nef gerði seiðinn, at hann mælti svá fyrir, at Gísla skyldi ekki at gagni verða, þó at menn byrgi hánun hér á landi. En þat kom hánun eigi í hug, at skilja til um úteyjar, ok endiz því þetta hótí lengst" (69). 'And this have men said, that Ingjaldr gave most help to Gísli and that he was of the great-

est assistance to him. And this also was said that when Thorgrim Nose worked his spell, which he previously uttered, to the effect that Gísli should receive no help, though men might aid him here on the mainland, it did not occur to him that he should make a provision concerning the outlying islands also. And for this reason Gísli lived a little longer.' All things considered, however, Gísli received only slight aid and he was compelled to struggle singlehandedly against his fate. And this conflict, as the others do, imposes order and form upon the events of his life. Not only does this conflict lie behind and explain his inability to gain the support of kinsmen and influential persons but it also provides a rationale for certain segments of his life, relating apparently disparate incidents and actions to one unifying and shaping pattern.

The two women who appeared to Gísli in his dreams, the one good and the other evil, seem to be dramatic means of portraying Gísli's awareness of his conflict with some supernatural force, with his own fate. As he was pressed ever more hotly by his foes and as he became increasingly more certain that no substantial help would be forthcoming, he became more conscious of the hopelessness of his position. His awareness of his chances for victory in his struggle with fate is personified by the two dream-women. The worse his predicament and the nearer he approached to his death, the more frequent were the appearances of the evil dream-woman. Toward the very end of his life, she came to him so often and in such horrible visions that he feared the dark and could not remain alone (88). Although G. W. Dasent regards these dream-women as representatives of two opposing religions, the old stern pagan faith of the North and the new mild Christianity, their obvious connection with Gísli's destiny and the parallels that they exhibit to his plight seem to justify a psychological rather than a religious interpretation.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, by considering the dream-women

<sup>11</sup> G. W. Dasent, tr., *The Story of Gísli the Outlaw* (Edinburgh, 1866), xxviii-xxix, offers the following opinion concerning the significance of these women: "Of Gísli himself it may be said that the verses in which he recites his dreams represent the struggle which was passing in his mind between the old religion and the new. His two dream-wives are but personifications—the one of the mild and forgiving spirit of Christianity, the other of the bloody and relentless superstition of the North. Valkyrie and Guardian Angel, as it were, fight for the body of the great champion while he is alive, and for his soul after death. His last verses would seem to show that he died

as personifications of Gísli's hopes to escape his doom and to live a normal life in society and of his knowledge that fate would overpower him, we see dramatized before our eyes the inner struggle that he must certainly have experienced. Early in his outlawry, before the hopelessness of his situation became perfectly clear, both women appeared to him: "Ek á draumkonur tvær . . . ok er ǫnnur vel við mik ok ræðr jafnan heilt, en ǫnnur segir mér þat nǫkkut jafnan, er mér þykkir verr en áðr, ok spár mér illt eina" (56). 'I have two dream-women . . . and the one wishes well to me and always gives good advice, but the other always announces to me things that seem to me to be worse than before and prophesies only evil for me.' Later, however, we learn that "ok nú segir Gísli, at konan sú en verri kǫmr opt at hánú ok vill jafnan ríða hann blóði ok roðru ok þvá hánú í, ok lætr sér illiga" (62). 'And now Gísli said that the worse woman came often to him and that she wished ever to smear him with blood or something red and to wash him in it, and she showed herself to be in all ways hideous.' Subsequently, as he came closer to his death, "ok koma aptr draumar hans allir, ok harðar svefnfarar, ok komr nú jafnan at hánú draumkonan sú en verri, ok þó hin stundum, en betri" (79). 'And all his nightmares and evil dreams came back to him, and now his worse dream-woman came to him constantly, although now and then the better one appeared.' Finally, "nú líðr á haustit, ok minkar ekki draumana, ok heldr er vaxandi gangr at þeim" (90). 'Now it passed into autumn and the dreams did not lessen but rather their activity increased.' The triumph of the evil over the good woman foreshadows the conquest of Gísli by fate though it does not in any way signal his capitulation or abject surrender. Knowing that he is fully conscious of the doom that has hung over his head, we can admire all the more the courage with which he resists the inevit-

trusting in nothing but his own daring and hardihood." R. B. Allen, tr., *The Saga of Gísli* (New York, 1936), ix, interprets these visions in much the same way. This interpretation presents one insuperable difficulty: it fails to relate the dream-women to the action of the story. If the dream-women are regarded as personifications of two religions, they interrupt for no good reason the progress of the narrative toward its inevitable conclusion by introducing irrelevant religious considerations. If, however, the dreams are interpreted as manifestations of Gísli's subconscious, as symptoms of his inner turmoil and anxiety, they not only are organic to this portion of the story but also contribute positively and effectively to the tension that the reader experiences as Gísli moves nearer to his death.

able and refuses to acknowledge defeat even when he contends with insuperable forces. His final dream in which he saw himself attacked by bloody birds appears to be a direct prophecy of his final combat with Eyjólfur and his party (92-93), yet even this failed to lessen the vigor of his defense when the decisive battle was finally joined. Because dreams appear to be somewhat mysterious and supernatural, though belonging to the real world, they are an appropriate device for portraying fate. At the same time, the contention between the good and the evil dream-women expresses the hopes and fears that Gísli could conceal when he was awake but which came to the surface when his iron control was relaxed in sleep. His continuing conflict with fate, therefore, is dramatized, is given visible form, by the clash between the two dream-women.

In order to fuse the major conflicts that give artistic shape to the events of Gísli's life, the narrator brought together and terminated all three at one point. The encounter that caused the hero's death resolves decisively the struggle between Gísli and Þorkr. Simultaneously, that same fight puts an end to the conflict between the outlaw and society. Inasmuch as Gísli met his death, in that combat, it may be regarded as the ultimate victory for fate, too. By linking the various elements of the structure in this manner, the author gains some of the unity and focus that so impress the modern reader.

As a way of holding the parts of his story together even more firmly, the narrator employed a motif that appears at the beginning and persists throughout a significant portion of the tale. On the first few pages, the sword Grásíða shows up prominently in the action. For the purpose of fighting Björn enn blakki, a berserker, in a holmgang, the hero's uncle borrowed this weapon from Ingibjörg's thrall, Kolr. After the combat, Kolr claimed the sword but Gísli (the uncle of the hero of the saga) was unwilling to return it. The matter ended with Kolr and Gísli killing each other and the sword being broken (2-3). The fragments of Grásíða were inherited by Gísli and Þorkell and came into the possession of the latter when the two brothers divided their father's estate (24). Þorkell and the two Þorgríms fashioned a spear out of the pieces of Grásíða (24), and it was this weapon that was used by Þorgrímr to slay Vésteinn. By recognizing the spear and by knowing who owned it, Gísli was able to identify the killer; and rather appropriately he employed this same weapon in

murdering Þorgrímr (40). Thus Grásíða played an important role in two killings during the hero's lifetime, the latter of which was the cause of his being declared an outlaw. Through its appearance at crucial moments in the narrative, a suggestion of unity, an impression that the one event is closely related to the other, is created.

In addition to employing Grásíða as a motif in order to unify his materials, the author achieved much the same result by confronting one character after another with the same problem. Þórdís, Þorkell, and Gísli found themselves at various times in more or less identical predicaments requiring that they select one of several conflicting courses of action, each of which was sanctioned by the strongest possible motives and loyalties. The effect of this repetition is to suggest that the story is all of a piece, that the one part is an echo or reflection of the other; and against the background of essentially similar situations any slight differences stand out strikingly and assume increased importance. In the hands of a skillful story-teller, such as the narrator of the *Gísla saga*, this device is useful for revealing character as well as for fostering the impression that the story is completely unified.

At the games following the slaying of Þorgrímr, Þórdís heard Gísli recite some enigmatic verses hinting that he was Þorgrím's killer. Þórdís's knowledge of Gísli's guilt placed her in a most difficult position. She was Gísli's sister and was therefore bound to him by blood-kinship. To the extent that her actions were governed by this particular allegiance, she was obligated to conceal her knowledge of the identity of Þorgrím's slayer, for obviously disclosure of the murderer's name would bring swift vengeance upon him. On the other hand, she had been the wife of Þorgrímr, and her duty to his memory required that she expose the killer so that proper vengeance could be sought. Furthermore, Þorgrím's brother, Þorkr, who sought to discover and kill Þorgrím's slayer, married Þórdís immediately after she became a widow. As a result, the pressure upon Þórdís to tell Þorkr what she learned about Þorgrím's death was doubled. In the end, after prolonged hesitation in which she debated with herself concerning the correct course of action, she informed Þorkr of Gísli's deed and thereby set in motion the events leading to her brother's outlawry and eventual death (44-47).

After Gísli's murder, Þórdís found herself once more faced with the same decision: Eyjólf, the killer of her brother, was being enter-

tained in her house by Þorkr. Although Þórdís was instrumental in putting Þorkr and Eyjólfur on Gísli's trail, she apparently suffered a change of heart, for she attempted to kill Eyjólfur and then deserted Þorkr permanently. Her actions indicate that in her judgment the bonds of kinship to Gísli were stronger at this time than the ties holding her to Þorgrímr, her first husband, and to Þorkr, her second husband (98-99). The reader understands the difficulty of her choice and, based upon his admiration for Gísli and upon something less than admiration for the sluggish Þorkr, recognizes that her second decision was the right one.

Þorkell, Gísli's brother, arrived at a somewhat different solution to the same problem. He was bound to support Gísli because of their brotherhood, but, on the other hand, he was closely allied to Þorgrímr. He explained his dilemma by telling Gísli that "þykki mér ok mikit af gort við mik, at drepinn er Þorgrímr mágr minn ok félagi ok virk-ðavinr" (49). 'It seems to me that much has been done against me in that Thorgrim was killed, my brother-in-law, partner, and friend.' Yet he was forced to align himself either with or against Gísli. His solution was to offer limited aid to Gísli while ostensibly remaining on the opposing side. By way of help to his brother, he concealed Gísli's frozen shoes that would have betrayed his part in the slaying of Þorgrímr (42); he warned Gísli that Þorkr sought to slay him (47-49); and later, by deceiving Þorkr, he managed to inform Gísli that Þorkr was headed his way with a large group of men (49-50). But, as we have noted previously, Þorkell would only warn Gísli and offer indirect aid, though he had several opportunities to do more and appeals to do more were made specifically on the basis of his kinship with Gísli. His was a rather timid and faint-hearted reaction to a choice that was hard but called nevertheless for a full commitment to one side or the other, not for a compromise.

Even Gísli faced a perplexing problem, but, as might be expected, his solution was bold and forthright. At one time, Gísli had been on the brink of swearing brotherhood with Þorgrímr (14), and Þorgrímr was of course Gísli's brother-in-law, being married to Þórdís. Moreover, as Gísli knew, Þorgrímr was the close companion and business associate of Þorkell. As a result, when Vésteinn was slain, Gísli was compelled to choose between his ties to Þorgrímr and his loyalty to Vésteinn. He defended his decision thus: "var eigi þess ván um slíkan

mann, sem Vésteinn var, at eigi myndi mannhefndalaust vera" (49). 'It was not to be expected in the case of such a man as Vésteinn was, that there would not be some manner of blood-vengeance.' It is obvious that when a breach was made in a community as tightly knit as was the Icelandic, many persons were forced to pick, on the basis of conflicting loyalties, one faction or the other, and that such decisions were not easy to make. By depicting the choices of different characters when confronted by the same alternatives, the author exposes Þórdís's vacillation, Þorkell's ambivalence, and Gísli's decisiveness, and at the same time through this very repetition makes clear the fundamental unity of the various episodes and actions of the saga.

At the beginning of this paper, some laudatory comments concerning the construction of the *Gísli saga* were cited, and an investigation of the structure of the story was undertaken as a means of explaining why critics held it in such high esteem. It can now be seen that the author of this tale did more than just tell a story; he employed great skill in selecting and ordering his materials with the result that the *Gísli saga*, though seeming at first glance to be a simple, straightforward account of an outlaw's experiences, is really a most subtly wrought and complex literary creation. Upon primarily biographical materials, the narrator imposed artistic form by means of three principal conflicts: the personal contention between Gísli and Þorkr, the public struggle between Gísli and society, and the intangible but nonetheless very real contest between Gísli and fate. He achieved a partial unification of these conflicts through the climactic combat that put an end to all three at one time. Further connections among the various events of Gísli's life were established through the use of a theme—the sword Grásíða—and through the repetition of similar situations. In this study, we have examined in some detail the construction of the saga and have discovered how the story-teller has integrated his materials; as a result, we can understand why modern critics have praised its structure so highly.



## HAWTHORNE'S SKETCH OF QUEEN CHRISTINA: A NOTE

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IT IS always interesting to learn what our famous writers have said about foreign personalities. Much has been written about Queen Christina of Sweden, and it is of special interest to American students of Swedish descent to learn what Nathaniel Hawthorne thought about the Swedish ruler. How many students know that Hawthorne ever mentioned her? As daughter of Gustavus Adolphus and later a Catholic convert, she has not ordinarily been handled with soft gloves by Protestant authors, and only recently, in the historical novel, *The Flight*, by Ruth Stephan, has she received anything like a sympathetic evaluation. What did Hawthorne think of this enigmatic and in some respects notorious queen?

In the literary relations between Sweden and America the best known personalities are Washington Irving, Emerson, Bayard Taylor, Longfellow, Lowell, and Whittier. But there were others, like Percival, Poe, Whitman, Mark Twain, and Hawthorne, the last named of whom wrote about nine pages on Queen Christina for the benefit of the education of young girls. (See *Tales, Sketches And Other Papers*, Riverside Edition. Vol. XII, 1887, pp. 203 ff.)

Frankly, though he mentioned some illuminating things about her: Hawthorne did not like the young queen very well, and wrote this brief sketch of her life to show young parents and others how *not* to bring up children of the female sex. Possibly he knew of her boyish proclivities such as horseback-riding, probably astride. At all events, he did not approve of her education; it did not bring love or happiness, and in this contention Hawthorne was, perhaps, right. He knew about Christina's characteristics: she was, supposedly, bold, uncouth, man-nish, independent, and plain in appearance; but Hawthorne seems, also, to have retained all the common prejudices and ignorance in her disfavor, and reveals little of the many extenuating circumstances that might favor her. Late research describes Christina as a peace-loving young woman, who would have no coronation until after the Thirty Years' War. Of course, she is later accused of great extravagance, particularly at her coronation, but that was probably because she was in this instance nationally proud and wished on the occasion



to show off her country advantageously to visiting foreign potentates. After all, Sweden after the Peace of Westphalia was supposed to be rich.

Hawthorne knew about the Queen's classical learning, but, as noted, mentions hardly any ameliorating domestic or personal conditions. To be just, it should have been added that young Christina adored her father, while she disliked her German-born mother, in part for reasons beyond her control. It is said that her mother shunned her because of her unprepossessing appearance. She was a sensitive child in some ways, and when she later, through a woman, learned what is generally known as "the facts of life," she decided, like Queen Elizabeth I of England, to remain a spinster. Let someone else produce an heir for the Swedish throne! She can not be censured for the political situation which in the absence of her father assigned the chief part of her education to a regency of men. She did like to act like a boy, it is claimed, and later preferred to be called "king" rather than "queen," evidently considering this to be a woman's privilege. It is admittedly difficult to imagine even Queen Christina, as Hawthorne apparently believed, as appearing at the magnificent court of Louis XIV in France with improper dress and soiled hands (p. 212). However, he may be right in this assumption, and he emphasized the possible incident for didactic purposes to demonstrate how much better off the American girls were, with their education, than the poor Swedish Queen Christina. It is a striking observation, and perhaps Sweden should be proud to know that a famous American author bothered with writing anything at all about the very learned but allegedly obstreperous young Swedish queen. "Happy are the little girls of America, who are brought up quietly and tenderly at the domestic hearth," says Hawthorne, "and thus become gentle and delicate women! May none of them ever lose the loveliness of their sex by receiving such an education as that of Queen Christina!" (p. 212)\*

\* One may ask: what was Hawthorne's source or sources? We do not know, but almost any reference work on the time, such as an encyclopedia, would probably have something about Queen Christina, who was rightly famous. Besides, several historical works on Sweden and the Swedes had appeared before or in Hawthorne's time. Some of these had been translated into English, such as Anders Fryxell's *The History of Sweden* (1844), edited by Mary Howitt, and E. G. Geijer's *The History of the Swedes* (1845), in a translation by J. H. Turner. Certainly one of these had been available to Hawthorne.

## STRINDBERG'S *ENSAM*: A STUDY IN STRUCTURE AND STYLE

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WHEN one takes the title of the manuscript—*Ensamheten*—into consideration, one could be tempted into believing the work to be a treatise on solitude. The little book contains not a few speculations about that state and consists partly of explanations of repeated experiences and regular habits. The author's attitude toward the solitary life is not always the same; it is like almost everything else about him ambivalent, bipolar, a shifting between negative and positive opposites. There is a series of passages where solitude is interpreted as oppressive isolation, for example:

p. 128: "I don't want to deny that the beginning was hard, and that the emptiness that closed about me demanded filling."

p. 152: "In three weeks I had not talked to another human being, and because of that my voice . . . had become so toneless and so faint it could not be heard . . . then I got uneasy; felt solitude as an excommunication . . ."

p. 153: "I believe it is my destiny to be alone, and that that is best for me: I want to believe that, because otherwise everything would be too irreconcilable."

p. 177: "My neighbors in the house have moved to the country and I sense that the rest of the apartments are empty . . . I'm collapsing as if contact with humanity were interrupted."

p. 189: "The evening became sad . . . I looked forward with horror to the long last hour that remained. It seemed to me as long as infinity . . . I had not chosen solitude; it had been forced upon me, and now I hated it as an involuntary restraint."

p. 213: "This winter had crept forward quite pleasantly, because I was not alone any longer, and I had a goal for my wanderings . . ."

But most of the book is still concerned with the positive side of the isolated mode of life: Solitude is presented as a protective shell about the author's inner life and his creative work.

Strindberg changed *Ensamheten* to *Ensam*, wrote a story in the first person, in which individualizing narratives alternate with summarizing reports, and fitted the little book into his autobiography, although he calls himself a widower, has a son, who at the age of nine went to America with his mother; and he lives as a paying guest with

a widow among strange furniture—just to mention three of the details which do not correspond to the facts of Strindberg's life.

Between *Tjänstekvinnans son* and *Le plaidoyer d'un Fou* on the one hand and *Ensam* on the other lies not only more than a decade and a half but the major crisis depicted in the books, *Inferno* and *Légendes*, as well. Strindberg has in the meanwhile undergone a religious conversion. He uses his confessionless Christianity for self-discipline in order to tame his violent nature. While he earlier sought and discussed realistic factual coherence, he now believes in and experiences a great many unrealistic ones, which he calls "ockulta." Besides, he has—along with religion—accepted classical German music. All this has helped make solitude no longer an inferno for him and has given his autobiographical *Ensam* a completely different structure and style from the two earlier autobiographical works, *Tjänstekvinnans son* and *Le plaidoyer d'un Fou*.

The significance of religion for self-discipline is most strongly emphasized in chapter III:

p. 145: "This is solitude ultimately: to weave oneself into the silk of one's own soul, become a chrysalis, and wait for the metamorphosis, for that will not fail to come . . . Death and resurrection; a new training for an unknown new state . . . Now the soul begins to grow in newly gained freedom and one experiences a great inner peace and a quiet joy and a feeling of security and self-responsibility."

p. 147: "The first thing that one comes to in solitude is the reckoning with oneself and the past. That takes time and effort, and is a complete education in self-conquest . . ."

p. 147 f.: "Balzac . . . the great magician had given me not only a certain resignation, a submission to destiny or Providence which spared me from the pain of the worst blows, but also had given me unwittingly a sort of religion which I would like to call confessionless Christianity . . . out of his world I got a new point of view on my own [life]; and . . . stopped . . . finally at a kind of reconciliation with suffering, when I at the same time discovered how sorrow and pain, as it were, burned the wastes of my soul completely, refined my instincts and feelings and even conferred greater skills upon the soul released from my tortured body. Since then I have taken the chalices of life as medicine." [Note that Strindberg does not mention Swedenborg here.]

About his meditations in the evening with the help of various devotional books and his collection of Bibles Strindberg writes in great detail on pages 156–160. The central passage is on page 159:

that the Bible, for those of us born into Christianity, has the power to discipline is certain; if it is because our forefathers have put psychic powers into that book at the same time they have secured strength from it is hard to say. Sanctuaries, temples and

holy books actually have this power as accumulators, but only for believers, since faith is my personal battery without which I can't get the speechless vellum to speak. Faith is my counter current which stirs up power through influence; faith is the grater which electrifies the glass; faith is the recipient, and must be the conductor, otherwise there won't be any reception.

This is the major passage, but, scattered through all chapters, there are many passages about religion and self-discipline which give the book its basic tone.

In the preceding quotation Strindberg uses a series of terms from physics to clarify the power of the Bible and the function of faith. These figures are not poetic in an ordinary sense, but are used to characterize an unrealistic, "occult," coherence. In *Ensam*, Strindberg uses the word "ockult" only four times, three of them in connection with his "tionde-gumma" (134, 136, 172) and once in "Ensor's ockulta larvscener" (180). But "occult" combinations and events occur frequently. For example:

p. 126 f.: "Or it happened in a completely demonic way that all spoke at once . . . a Babylonian confusion."

p. 133: "There are people, strangers, who radiate enmity so that I cross over to the opposite sidewalk in order not to get near them."

p. 135: about dreams and pieces of paper.

p. 136: "I call the old woman occult because I can't explain why she appears just when she should."

p. 138: "I sometimes ask myself, what sort of thick-skinned people they are who do not feel in the silence of the night how others, awakened from their sleep, lie uttering curses upon their [the dog-owners'] heads! Don't they sense how justified hate radiates through their ceilings and floors and walls and summons forth evil over the other people's heads?"

p. 140: "The telephone . . . sang so sadly in my wall." (Compare p. 143: "then I heard songs of sorrow—long, endless ones . . .")

p. 148 f.: "When I walk past it [a house] there is something friendly and sympathetic about it which comes to me, and it is as if I expect to be permitted to move into it some day and receive peace."

p. 149: "When I . . . see a person coming from the other side of the hill, there first appears a head sticking up out of the ground, then the shoulders and then the whole body. This happens in half a minute and strikes me as very mysterious."

p. 151: "That corner over by the tobacco shed is my horror; but it attracts me at times as strangely as everything else painful."

p. 153 f.: The morning mood after a night when he has slept well grows to a megalomania.

p. 154 f.: The landscape at Brunnsviken and Rosendal. "But it, too, has its own mood, and there are mornings when we are not in rapport."

p. 158: A seventeenth-century Bible: "It's as if hate and wrath had accumulated in this book; and it does nothing but scold and punish; no matter how I turn the pages I always come to David's and Jeremiah's curses over their enemies, but I don't want to read them . . ."

p. 178: "And now my wish was no more than expressed (according to actual reality) before it was granted . . . the war maneuvers seem . . . like plays, which are presented for my benefit." (Compare page 192: "much of what happens seems staged only for me.")

pp. 179-183: The whole excursion in the cab is a chain of nightmarish events.

p. 200: "One evening the girl comes in with a calling card just when I was longing for company . . ."

p. 204: "A decided impression: 'You must not search into his destiny!'"

p. 205: "The newest part of Riddargatan is full of romanticism, not to say mysticism."

p. 207: Strindberg here relates an experience from his youth when a man had died next to him but on the other side of the wall [in the adjoining room] with a number of mysterious details.

p. 209: Even the story of the composer and his fiancée becomes—in Strindberg's presentation—full of strange combinations.

This unusually realistic "occultism," without mystery in the strict sense, parallels the theme of religion in *Ensam*.

The third new element is classical music:

p. 137: The singer and her woman friend, "who comes to play Beethoven for me."

p. 189: Solitude is hated as constraint during a long, heavy evening: "I wanted an outburst; I wanted to hear music, something by the great composers, by the greatest one, who had suffered his whole life through . . . I longed especially for Beethoven, and I began to awaken in my ear the last measure of the Moonlight Sonata which has become for me the highest expression of humanity's longing for liberation, and which no poem in words has ever been able to express." (Note how Strindberg's concept of Beethoven's music and the idea of liberation merge into one. He considers the Moonlight Sonata greater than his own literary works. And now this wish is granted—in an occult way: "Then I heard . . . the tremendous allegro . . . unfold like a gigantic fresco." The sonata is played three times between nine and ten. The matter strikes Strindberg as inexplicable.)

p. 206 ff.: Strindberg speaks with understanding about the composer's oneness: "Everything had become tones, measures, and rhythm for him" (207), so, too, with his musical accompaniment to the girl's movements: "It seemed as if he were composing for her tempo, her dancing steps, her swinging walk, the dance like movements of her arms, the bending of her neck." (212)

In all these three new elements in Strindberg's writing it is characteristic that his language develops richly as the quoted passages indicate.

It is obvious that in *Ensam* he also says a great deal about his writing, which shows change in solitude:

p. 128: "Besides, I accustomed myself to transforming everything I saw and heard, everything in the house, on the street, out in nature, and relating everything I was aware of to the work I was doing, I felt how my capital grew, and the studies I made in solitude proved more worthwhile than those I made about people out in society."

p. 129: When he once felt himself "bankrupt," "a ghastly chromo" gave him the impulse for a scene.

p. 132: "I'm still in the midst of my struggle and my work ahead."

p. 142: "Now he had the bad luck that I was a writer of comedies and had studied both the play of features and dialog." He succeeds in exposing the groceryman at the telephone as a comedian.

p. 153: "I'm trying . . . to keep my balance between what I give out and what I take in, every day [I] have to find an outlet through writing, and an intake through reading."

p. 154: "I burn with the desire to get to work, but I have to get out first." But after the walk, he really gets to work; here follows the famous and often quoted passage about the joy that productive hours give: "When I get home however . . . an indescribable joy." (155-156)

p. 163: On a morning walk the author gets "a view of a room unknown to me and from that a bit of the story of one human being's life." He relates what he observes. "When I had come home, I outlined the drama. And I had got that through a shutter!" (164)

p. 164: "For the most part I take the impressions of the moment and work out what I have seen afterwards."

p. 166 f.: Moving day in April reminds the author of his restless migratory life, and his memories concentrated themselves into a poem which he has called 'Ahasverus.' " (167-170)

p. 173: "I live in my work and ahead of my self, sometimes back of my self, in my memories, and these I can treat as the pieces in a box of bricks. With them I can put together all kinds . . ."

p. 177: "I sense my own thoughts as spoken words; I seem to be in telepathetic rapport with all absent friends, relatives and enemies; I carry on long orderly conversations with them, or repeat old speeches from groups in cafés; I argue against their ideas, defend my point of view, speak more effectively than I do before an audience . . . sometimes this state expands to the point where I enter into a debate with the whole nation." (This is developed.) One can not help thinking about *Tal till svenska nationen*, 1910-1911.

p. 192: "The habit of transforming what I have experienced into poetry opens the safety valve for an oversupply of impressions and replaces the need to talk . . . In that fashion I became the witness of a fire in town one evening, but at the same time I heard the howling of the wolves from Skansen. These two ends of different threads were tied together in my imagination, were put into relationship and wove themselves with suitable channeling into a poem: 'Vargarne tjuta.'" (192-196)

p. 201: The unknown visitor relates "calmly and with dignity" that he has come "from prison." "Prison? (Now he became interesting, because I was just then at work on a crime story.)"

pp. 206 ff.: Strindberg tells about his collaboration with a young composer.

It becomes quite obvious that solitude is a protective wall around the author's workshop. No, the book is certainly not a dissertation on solitude; it simply gives Strindberg an opportunity, released from social life, to concentrate on himself. He expresses this idea again and again in varied forms. For example:

p. 127: "I . . . withdrew each time more healed, until I finally found the great pleasure of hearing the silence and listening to the new voices one can hear there."

p. 128: "At the same time my ego began as it were to coagulate, concentrate itself about a core, in which everything I had experienced collected itself, fused and was taken up as nourishment by my soul!"

p. 131: About the furnishings of the room: "Well, now all this had become mine; I had pulled the cover of my spirit over all this, and the decor could only serve in my drama, in *mine!*"

p. 135: "In my dreams are reflected my innermost being, and for that reason I use them as I use my shaving mirror: to see what I am doing, and to avoid cutting myself."

p. 145: "This is the essence of solitude: to spin oneself into the silk of one's own soul . . ."—"At last one is in sole possession of his own person."

p. 146: "What I have also gained in solitude is the right to determine my own spiritual diet."

pp. 153 f.: "In the morning, after a sober evening and a thoroughly restful night when I get up out of bed, life itself is a positive pleasure. It is like rising from the dead. All



the faculties of the soul are regenerated, the strength acquired in sleep seems to have increased many times over."

p. 156: "When I . . . free my body from my clothes with all their buttons, buckles, restraints and snaps, it seems to me as if my soul were catching its breath and feeling freer."

In essence, *Ensam* is a many-sided and intensive self-portrait of the author during the years 1902 and 1903, in the very midst of the most productive period of his life. Strindberg began his literary production in 1869 and continued for about twenty-five years (up until 1893) to create new works. The Inferno-interlude with its retardation of his creative tempo came in 1894-1896. In 1897 he returned—by means of *Inferno*—to the world of books; and in 1898 followed *Legender* (begun in French). Only a few contributions to *Malmö Tidningen* (1896-1897) had appeared before these two major works.

Following them came a mighty eruption of his dynamic soul in work after work. Between 1898 and 1909, within twelve or thirteen years, he produced at least as much as in the quarter century before the crisis, among other works thirty-five dramas (as compared to twenty-five), about three a year instead of one. In *Ensam*, we discover how a solitary and gifted person fills every hour of his lonely life with ten times as many experiences as other people. *Tjänstekvinnans son* and *Le plaidoyer d'un Fou*, constructed on a realistic-naturalistic basis, are filled with reflections and discussions, by questions which frequently do not lead to any answer or to any satisfactory result. In *Ensam*, Strindberg no longer questions and searches; it is not an analytical but a synthesizing book. He relates, for example, about his reading of fifty volumes by Balzac: "Then I had found myself and could synthesize all my life's hitherto unsolved antitheses." (147). This self-portrait is a unified masterpiece, which everyone would see and recognize without delay, if it were a painted picture; it stands out in the clair-obscur of Rembrandt!

The book *Ensam* is divided into seven chapters. The first short one relates in great detail how the author gradually became solitary (121-127). In the second he depicts his rooms, his landlady, his impersonal "associations" during walks outdoors and his similar "associations" indoors and ends with the tragedy of the groceryman, which he experiences intensely from beginning to end. (128-144). The third chapter contains, as already said, primarily the explanation of his



religion and self-discipline, but has been extended by means of the impassioned account of his *via dolorosa* with flashbacks from the author's past. (145-160). In the fourth chapter (161-170) comes spring. For the first time the view from the balcony is made to include a woodland down by the seashore in the distance. (162). But he continues to wander on the streets and gives two examples of what he then experiences while looking into a window, once during the day, the other time in the evening, (and then with an especially dramatic effect). (164-166). The chapter ends with the poem "Ahasverus." The fifth chapter concerns spring itself. (171-190). For the second time he tells about Östersjövikén. The author follows with his telescope what happens out on the bay and experiences in this fashion a little drama between a ten-year-old girl and a cow. (174-177). The solitude is interrupted by military drills visible from the author's window. (178 f.) He ventures out on a cab tour. (179-183). He has a visitor; the maid tells him his son has been there and thereby plunges him into upsetting thoughts and ideas; but later the guest proves to have been a nephew. (183-188). He interprets his fancies in an occult fashion. His son was in distress far away. (188 f.). The day ends with Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata. (189-190). Just as eventful is the sixth chapter (191-211), which begins with August 1. Here the poem "Vargarne tjuta" (192-196) is inserted. Books are now his only companions. Balzac is again mentioned and his art characterized. (197). Goethe is the author's only other friend. Here follows an erroneous interpretation of Goethe's life and work, especially with regard to his religion. Strindberg transfers his own conversion to Goethe. (See Berendsohn's "Goethe och Strindberg," *Samlaren*, 1949, 118 ff., especially 124 ff.); but in general the summarizing characterization of Goethe is accurate. (199). Still another visitor, this time an ex-convict, who begs for help. A dramatic dialog, the only one in the whole book, develops. The punctuation, the introductions to the speeches, resembling stage directions are broadly done, with expressions from colloquial language. (200-205). Then begins the story of the composer and his fiancée (205-211), which ends in the short seventh chapter with the account of the composer's engagement. (212-216). But the major fact about this motive is that the musician lives in the same room that the author had lived in thirty years before, so he can include flashbacks from his own life. He ends *Ensam*, happy about what he has accomplished and

ready for continued struggle and work: "Was I tired and old? No, the struggle went on more furiously than before, more seriously and on a bigger scale, forward, always forward; but if I had previously had enemies before me, I had them now both before and behind me . . . I [felt] just as young and able to battle as I had a generation before; the goal alone was new, since the old mileposts were behind me . . ." (214 f.). This sounds as the opening of the attack Strindberg began with *Götiska rummen* (1904) and continued with *Svarta fanor* and *En blå bok*.

This short survey testifies to the varied contents of the book. There are no repetitions, no empty declamations or reflections, but constantly shifting experiences, which are much more than variations of the subject "ensamheten." They are all filled with decidedly subjective elements, permeated by the author's hypersensitivity, temperament, suffering, fancies and thoughts, and thereby become parts of his characterization of himself, a characterization that is entirely too complex and too rich in tensions and contradictions to be reproduced in one portrayal. But with *Ensam* Strindberg has himself written the best introduction to his life and his literary authorship after the Inferno crisis.

This self-portrait is presented against the background of a comprehensive depiction of Stockholm, the most intense one Strindberg ever produced. There is a notable passage in *Tjänstekvinnans son*: "It was John's dream to get to live in the country. He had an innate dislike of the city, even though he was born in a capital. He could never adjust himself to a life without light and air, never feel at home on these streets and squares, which were as if made for the bringing to market of the superficial symbols, which indicated rising or falling on the absurd social scale, where minor matters such as clothes or manner of behavior signified so much. He had hostility to culture in his blood and could never get away from feeling that he was a child of nature, who did not want to be uprooted from his organic connection with the soil. He was a wild growth, who searched in vain with his roots for a bit of soil between the stones of the street, an animal who longed for the woods." (18, 242 f.) He looked in vain at that time for a position as teacher in a provincial town. (247). But this was surely only a passing mood while under the influence of Rousseau. Strindberg was a Stockholmer through and through and lived for fifty years in the city in which he was born and in its surroundings,

especially in the archipelago, which can be said to be part of the city. Usually he lived in the periphery of the city or high up so that he had an extensive view over the city, preferably where he could see a bit of the skerries, too. It is for that reason natural that his magnificent self-portrait is intimately connected with his beloved Stockholm.

Already in the first chapter he depicts the life in restaurants and cafés as a characteristic feature of Stockholm life. Even his impersonal "associations" in the second chapter on walks on the streets and indoors are not only a Strindbergian notion but something typical for many Stockholmers, who do not easily make acquaintances either indoors or outdoors. The story of the grocer is expressly localized in Östermalm. In the third chapter we find the fascinating, highly personally colored depiction of the author's *via dolorosa*. (148-152). Later he tells about the three routes he has to select among and depicts especially the landscape at Brunnsviken and that at Rosendal, where so many Stockholmers take their morning walks. (154 f.) In *Tjänstekvinnans son*, Strindberg had already told about three different routes, among which he chooses, according to his inner mood. John rents a room in Ladugårdslandet:

"Already a person extremely sensitive to impressions to an extreme degree he chose this section of the city because it had always been the goal of his childhood walks on May 1; and Storgatan certainly had something especially festive about it. Besides, it quickly led to Djurgården, which became his place for walking. The barracks with their drums and trumpets had something exciting about them, and the nearness of the sea opened up free views. It was airy and light there. In the mornings when he took his walks, he could choose his route to fit his mood. Tired and depressed, he would walk along the shadowed Sirishovsvägen; happy, he would take off towards the plain to Manila, where the paradise-like Rosendal-landscape framed the silence of pleasure and joy; in despair and shy, he would go out to Ladugårdsgärdet, where no human being would disturb his conversations with himself and his prayers to God." (19, 7)

A noteworthy resemblance of feelings which forms a bridge over three decades of Strindberg's life!

The coming of spring gives Strindberg a reason for comparing the past and the present and for fixing changes in customs—in itself a bit of cultural history. (161 f.). How Strindberg with his spyglass draws a bit of woodland by the seashore to himself we already know; in so doing he makes use of the silhouette of the city which is ever present in his memory as material for comparison: "This outline of a forest can look like the skyline of a city with its endless quantities of chimneys, spires, pinnacles, little towers and gables." (162). But

he does not long any more for the country: "for I have long since grown away from the nature which finds its expression in stones, plants and animals. What interests me now is human nature and human destiny." (162). We see him wandering through the streets and looking into store windows; he sees "many objects from all the countries of the world, produced or refined by human hands so that they, as it were, connect me with all humanity and give me a wealth of impressions, as color, form and closely related ideas." (163). Then follow [descriptions of] the interiors of two apartments he looks into. He notices various signs of the approach of spring: "larks are not to be found on Lärkvägen any more, but there are chaffinches in Humlegården and starlings in Fågelbacken"; and then moving day in April. (166 f.). In the fifth chapter, he continues his account of his lonely walks, now favored by the warm spring weather. (71-73). Since he feels deserted in the city, he takes his telescope and through its use participates in the life on the seashore. (173-177). From his window he enjoys the troop exercises on Gärdet as a play. (178-179). The trip by cab from Nybron out to Djurgården by way of Strandvägen and back home again one summer Sunday evening, when the poor people fill the streets and the park, is a detailed, fascinating account with dramatic elements. (179-183). Still another time he describes a morning walk, this time only sketchily since his fantasy is completely occupied by the expected return of his son from America. (186-188). On the first of August when the summer is drawing to an end, the gaslights are lighted (as in his chamber play *Oväder*), and the autumn comes and goes. He then briefly reports on life in Stockholm, but then comes the magnificent account of Stockholm at night in the poem "Vargarne tjuta" (192-196) in the sixth chapter. The story of the composer is woven into a sharply etched picture of the section bordered by Riddargatan, Banérgatan, Grev-Magnigatan. (205). This many-sided, detailed depiction of Stockholm actually runs through all the chapters of the book. Even in this period when Strindberg's subjectivity was so strongly intensified, he remained a great realistic artist and can for that reason weave a magnificent account of his native city into his intense self-portrait. One's respect for this work of art increases the more one penetrates into its structure and style.

The imagery is unusually rich; there are more than three hundred personally-colored images on ninety-six pages, that is, more than three per page on the average. But the rhetorical techniques of style

are manifold and are richly represented. Strindberg frequently employs exaggerated expressions in *Ensam*:

p. 122: "Those who had talked most experienced an oppression of spirits as if they had talked their heads off."

p. 125: "At the table, where one felt like a beggar and parasite."

p. 129: "When I . . . once in the midst of writing felt bankrupt."

p. 132: "that there is no point in his looking to me for an accomplice's sympathy"

p. 134: "I call her the queen of the world or the protector of the universe, because that's what she looks like."

p. 139: "When I lie on my sofa, I see only the air and the clouds. It's as if I were in a balloon, high above earth."

p. 152: "felt my solitude like an excommunication"

p. 153: "to feel one's intelligence expiring is as painful as feeling oneself degenerating spiritually and physically"

p. 155: "When I . . . catch sight of the southern part of the city with the whole of its splendid city skyline I feel as if I were in a strange and enemy country"

p. 156: "the desire for sleep pretty much resembles the longing for death"

p. 166: "was awakened so violently that I literally felt myself thrown out on the street"

p. 209: "The volumes of melodies forced me out of the crowded room and I felt a need to throw myself out of the window."

There are in this book not only highly moving passages, above all the two poems, but "rhetorical compositions," i.e., well-rounded, effectively heightened passages as well. For example: about the joy of hours of creative work (155 f.), about faith (159 f.), and about controversies. (214 f.)

The keynote in *Ensam* is solemn, somewhat melancholy, but, on this foundation, highly varied according to the different motives and moods. It is gentler, richer, closer to every veering of the changing state of his soul, which I am inclined to consider the result of Strindberg's intimate experiences with classical music. If I were going to write a special monograph on Strindberg's prose style, I would choose *Ensam* to show his mastery of all the means of expression in the language.

[Editor's note: Professor Berendsohn's article is a section of his yet unpublished *August Strindbergs Stockholmskildringar, struktur- och stilstudier*.]

## REVIEWS

Malone, Kemp. *Studies in Heroic Legend and in Current Speech*. Edited by Stefán Einarsson and Norman E. Eliason. Rosenkilde and Bagger, Copenhagen, 1959. Pp. 297.

Ten years ago Kemp Malone was honored with a Festschrift entitled *Philologica: The Malone Anniversary Studies*, containing papers by colleagues and former students, on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday. The present Festschrift, which consists of nineteen papers by Malone himself from two of his favorite areas of research, was presented to him as a token of esteem with the heartfelt greetings of his colleagues on his seventieth birthday, March 14, 1959.

In the first and longest of these papers, "The Tale of Ingeld" (pp. 1-62), Malone succeeds in clarifying the exceedingly complex relationship of the widely differing versions of the Ingeld story to each other and to their common historical source, the wars between the Danes and Hadbards. He does this by means of a minute analysis and a careful comparison of all the pertinent literary documents. Probably the Ingeld Episode in *Beowulf* (lines 2014-2069) and the story of Ingjald in Snorri's *Ynglinga saga* are the versions of this tale which are most familiar to students of Old Norse. In *Beowulf* Ingeld, son of Froda, is king of the Hadbards. After being defeated by the Danes, Ingeld marries Freawaru, daughter of the Danish king Hroðgar, as a guarantee of peace between the two tribes. But he divorces Freawaru before any children are born to them, and war breaks out anew. Ingeld attacks the Danish royal palace Heorot and burns it, but falls in battle (we may assume this from *Widsið*). The older of the two Ingeld stories of Saxo Grammaticus, despite rather striking shifts in names and in motivation, derives from the same source as the *Beowulf* episode. The younger story of Saxo, on the other hand, seems to go back to the same version of the story as the Icelandic *Skjöldunga saga* (preserved only in the sixteenth-century Latin epitome of Arngrímur Jónsson), which in turn had some influence on Snorri's account. At first glance the version of Snorri and that of *Beowulf* seem to have little in common except a name and the trait of "burning in." The central figure, Ingjaldur Önnundarson, has become such an evil person that he is called *inn illráði*. As king in Upsala, he achieves a considerable aggrandizement of his territory by the simple expedient of inviting seven other district kings of Sweden to a banquet (only six accept), getting them drunk, and burning them to death in his hall. Ingjaldur is married to Gauthildr Algautsdóttir, with whom he has two children: a son, Óláfr trételgja, and a daughter Ása, who inherited her father's evil nature and was therefore endowed with the same opprobrious epithet, *in illráða*. Unable to repel the attack of one of his enemies, Ívarr inn víðfaðmi, Ingjaldur invites him to his hall in Ræningr, serves him liberally with drink, and burns down the hall. Ingjaldur also perishes in the flames. Malone's analysis of these and other related stories is not easy to read, partly because it combines material from three previously published articles and partly because it presupposes a thorough acquaintance with the chief literary documents on the part of the reader. But it is well worth the effort to follow Malone as he traces the development of the primitive historical tale of tribal enmity through a period of six centuries into legend and into the ramifications of its various literary forms.

Closely related is the second paper, "Hagbard and Ingeld" (pp. 63-81), in which Malone analyzes Saxo's tragic love story of Hagbard and Signe and points out such striking parallels between it and the tale of Ingeld that one can scarcely refrain from regarding them as different treatments of the same historical material. Malone, to be sure, does not go quite that far, but he does prove conclusively that both stories have their roots in the same historical complex of events and that they both employ the same sequence pattern. These two tales bring out a characteristic difference between English and Scandinavian story: the English tradition preserves the national element, which becomes confused or lost in the Scandinavian treatment of the same matter. A case in point is the complete disappearance of the Hadbards in Scandinavian tradition, for which Malone has an ingenious explanation. The alternative name for the Hadbards was the *Wicingas*, i.e., the dwellers of Bardowiek. *Wicingas* displaced the tribal name, then lost its geographical connotation through its association with Haco (Haki), who is described by Saxo as *maximus piratarum*. Since the Swedes were the opponents of the Danes, the word viking(s) took on the connotation of Swedish vikings and finally was replaced by the national name, Swedes. The enigmatic behavior of Signe, who fell in love with Haco (Haki) and secretly became the mistress of his brother Hagbard, is also neatly explained. In real life the brothers are one person, Haki Hagbard, i.e., Haki the Hadbard. In story, however, Haki is the viking *par excellence*, while Hagbard is the heroic lover.

"Freawaru" (pp. 197-201) presents an explanation of the name of Ingeld's wife. Rejecting his earlier interpretation of this name as 'lordly (or gracious) awareness,' Malone now explains it as 'lord and protector' on the basis of the name Freawine 'lord and friend' and similar compounds, such as *freadryhten* 'lord and master.' Another interesting etymology is found in the paper "Hrungnir" (pp. 202-203), in which, following the lead of Jacob Grimm, Malone makes a strong case for "big person" as the meaning of this giant's name. And in "Etymologies for Hamlet" (204-225) Malone traces the development of the originally Scandinavian *Anle øde* through its various Irish forms, back into Danish and finally to the Latinized *Amlæthus* of Saxo.

In "The Theodoric of the Rök inscription" (pp. 116-123) Malone offers cogent evidence that the alliterative runic inscription refers not to the Ostrogothic Theodoric the Great, as is commonly believed, but to the Frankish Theodoric, who is known in Germany as *Wolfdietrich* and in France as *Floovant*.

Students of the Eddic poems who have been baffled by the obscurities and seemingly irresolvable contradictions in the three *Helgakviður* will find considerable help in Malone's study of the tale of "Agelmund and Lamicho" (pp. 86-107) from the *Historia Langobardorum* of Paulus Diaconus. A comparison of Malone's reconstruction of the primitive account of Agelmund with that of the primitive form of the Helga story reveals that they are identical except for a slight deviation of the Northern version. Thus the *Helgakviður* go back to what may well be the oldest story preserved from Germanic antiquity, dating back to the time before the southern migration of the Langobards. This is especially interesting in view of Fritz Askeberg's recent radical assertions regarding the origin of Germanic heroic poetry (*Norden och kontinenten i gammal tid*. Uppsala, 1944). Taking a clue from Jacob Grimm and accepting Much's identification of the Langobards as the Hundingas of *Widsith*, Malone proceeds to explain the *Vulgares* of Paulus Diaconus as a Latinized form of *\*Wulg(w)aras* 'sons of



she wolves,' i.e., a derogatory designation for the Wulfings. The name Lamicho (older form Laiamicho) is etymologized as 'little dog' (cf. Gothic *laian* 'to revile,' Old Icelandic *la* 'to blame' and *laemingr* 'lemming,' originally 'barker'). Thus *Laiamicho* 'little barker' is a suitable name for a king of the Hundings. In the Hungar of *Widsith* (<\**Hundgar* 'dog-spear') Malone sees a reflection of the birth story of Lamicho, and he identifies the two names as the English and Langobardish designations for the same hero. The form *Wulgar* is discussed in more detail in the paper "Ecgtheow" (pp. 108-115). In all of the papers in this volume dealing with heroic legend (including those not touched on here for reasons of space) Malone was able to solve thorny problems of Scandinavian philology through his thorough knowledge of the pertinent English literary monuments, which frequently have preserved a more historical or more primitive form of story than that of Saxo Grammaticus or the Old Icelandic poems and sagas.

A few words must be said about two of Malone's studies in the field of Modern Icelandic. One of the scholarly outcomes of a year spent in Iceland (1919-1920) was his monograph *The Phonology of Modern Icelandic* (Menasha, Wisconsin, 1923), a pioneering work which is regarded by experts in Icelandic phonetics as an excellent analysis. For most students of Icelandic, however, the text (Part II) is of little use because of the alphabetical system employed. Far more valuable to the student of Scandinavian languages is Malone's paper on "The Phonemes of Modern Icelandic," reprinted with some modifications as the final paper in this Festschrift (pp. 268-282) from the *Studies in Honor of Albert Morey Sturtevant* (Lawrence, Kansas 1952). The non-linguist will do well to read the preceding paper, "The Phonemes of Current English" (pp. 226-267), before tackling this concise treatment of Icelandic phonemes in order to acquaint himself with the methods and *termini technici* of phonemics.

This handsome volume, which does honor to the author, the editors, and the publisher, also contains a list of the author's writings since 1949 (supplementing the bibliography of his first Festschrift), an index of proper names, and a *tabula gratulatoria*. In view of Kemp Malone's many significant contributions to the field of Scandinavian philology and specifically to the field of Icelandic, ancient and modern, it is altogether fitting that by an alphabetical fortuity the *tabula gratulatoria* should be headed by the President of Iceland, Ásgeir Ásgeirsson.

PAUL SCHACH  
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Hofsten, Nils von. *Eddadikternas djur och växter*. (Skrifter utgivna av Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien 30) Uppsala, 1957. Pp. 112.

Admittedly, one takes up a renewed discussion of the animals and plants of the Eddic poems with a certain amount of reluctance,—so much fussy, nationalistically-tinged scholarship has dealt with the problem to prove their Icelandic, or Norwegian, or North Atlantic milieu and hence their provenience! So it is a pleasant surprise to read this eminently competent treatise meant, as the author explains, as part of a complementary investigation of the flora and fauna of the Scandinavian peninsula in prehistoric times.

Though with undue modesty disclaiming a specialized knowledge of the Edda,



even philological training, the eminent Uppsala biologist and man of letters has a respectable, in fact, exhaustive command of the philological literature bearing on the subject—as the present writer certainly does not, of the corresponding biologic aspects of it. And the frequently involved problems are handled capably, with the reserve and detachment, often humorous, of the quasi-outsider scientist.

I would make one reservation: the threefold division established by him for the purpose of investigating the flora and fauna of the Eddic poems, viz. 1) the older, 2) the later poems about the gods, and 3) the heroic poems is both questionable and also entails a confusing repetition of evidence and arguments concerning identical animals and plants. Certainly, whether e.g. *Hymiskviða* and *Rígspula* belong to the older, and e.g. *Hyndluljóð* (with *Veluspá in skamma*) to a later, stratum will long remain undecided. Apart from this one follows the author's exhaustive and level-headed discussions with complete confidence. I would point out as particularly helpful his treatment of the knotty problems connected with plants like the ash (*askr Yggdrasils*) pp. 33–42, *gaglviðr* pp. 42–45, *hafr* 'oats' (or 'goat meat') pp. 56–61, *lin*, *laukr*, *úrlaukr*, *geirlaukr* pp. 95–104 (where, however, W. P. Lehmann's article on *lin* and *laukr*, *GR* 1955 (XXX), 63–71 has escaped him); and with animals like the bear pp. 15–18, the hawk pp. 21–23, the mysterious *óminnis hegri* 'the heron of forgetfulness' pp. 20–26 (about which see now Anne Holtsmark's illuminating article in *Arv* 1957 (XVI, 21 f.), the hart pp. 81–83.

The author refrains from drawing any general conclusions. Your reviewer, however, less cautious, would hazard the impression that the biologic evidence here marshalled does strengthen the claims of Norway as furnishing the milieu for the bulk of Eddic poems and that, per contra, direct evidence for Icelandic origin is lacking. It stands to reason that this treatise will have to be taken into account by any one who wishes to investigate the age and provenience of the Eddic poems.

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*Ortnamnen i Göteborgs och Bohus län XX: Ortnamnen i Vätte härad 2. Hogdals, Lomme-lands, Näsinge och Tjörnö socknar samt Strömstads stad.* Lund, 1958. Pp. xviii+338. 20 Swedish crowns (paper bound).

In 1902 the Swedish government decided to appoint a special committee (*Kungliga Ortnamnskomittén*) for the purpose of investigating the place-names of the country. Under the leadership of the enthusiastic philologist Adolf Noreen, who at that time was professor of Scandinavian languages at the University of Uppsala, the committee immediately went to work and in 1906 it was able to publish the first volume of the names in the county (*län*) of Älvsborg in western Sweden. It can be doubted whether the committee had fully visualized the scope of the project it had undertaken, for not until 1948 was the investigation of that single county completed and accounted for in twenty large volumes. And even if since that time the names of the province of Värmland have been published and a start has been made with the names of some other provinces, the main work still remains to be done.

Since 1928 the center for this investigation has been the Swedish Place-Names Archives (*Svenska Ortnamnsarkivet*) at Uppsala, for many years headed by Jöran Sahlgren who in 1930 received a personal professorship in Scandinavian toponymics,

As early as 1917, however, a smaller institution for place-name and dialect research had been founded in Gothenburg (*Institutet för Ortnamns- och Dialektforskning i Göteborg*), which in 1923 began the publication of *Ortnamnen i Göteborg och Bohus län* or the names in the south-western area of Sweden. The present volume which has been written by Dr. Gunnar Drougge in collaboration with the head of the institute, Professor Ture Johannisson, and others is the latest addition to this series.

As in previous volumes the physical conditions of the area, its fauna and flora, settlement, archaeology and important dialect characteristics are explained in a brief introductory chapter. The next section is devoted to the interpretation of the habitation names in the various parishes and in the town of Strömstad, but the main bulk consists of so-called nature names, i.e. names of lakes, rivers, bays, islands, mountains and hills, marshes, valleys, fields, forests, etc. To give an idea about the abundance of material it will suffice to mention that close to 6,000 names have been listed from this relatively small area. Naturally, it has not been possible to trace the origin of *all* these names, and in many cases where both older documentation and tradition are lacking the author and his collaborators have had to resort to guessing. On the whole, however, the explanations seem convincing, even if it isn't hard to point out some that sound rather farfetched. A few such cases might be picked out at random. The assumption (p. 36) that the element *hund* 'dog' in some Scandinavian place-names would refer to the devil is to begin with unlikely, and the material that is presented in support of the theory is not convincing. On the other hand, if the author were looking for Old Harry, he might have found him in the name *Fänsmyr* (p. 76) which—admittedly with some reservation—is explained as containing Icel. and Norw. *fen* 'marshland.' As is correctly pointed out, the explanation is made highly dubious by the fact that the last element *myr* also has that meaning; it might be added that the genitive form also makes the assumption unlikely. The element is no doubt *fän*, a dialect form of *fan* 'the devil,' corresponding to Old Swed. *fanden*, which also is found in southern Norway (Mandal etc.) according to Aasen's *Norsk Ordbog*. The name *Sprikerhällen* (p. 30) is said to contain the dialect word *spiker* 'spike, nail,' but the editor is at a loss to explain its use in the name. Since this is a coastal region one might venture a guess that we have to do with a Low German loan, *spiker*, High German *Speicher* (from Late Latin *spicarium*), meaning 'storehouse.' The name refers to a custom-lot.

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Hildeman, Karl-Ivar. *Medeltid på vers: Litteraturhistoriska studier*. Skrifter utgivna av Svenskt Visarkiv, I. Almqvist & Wiksell, Stockholm, 1958. Pp. 259. 25 crowns.

*Medeltid på vers* is an important contribution to the study of the medieval poetry of Sweden. It is not an attempt to treat comprehensively the entire body of verse in Swedish up to the time of the Reformation, as the title might suggest, although the author, in addressing himself to six knotty problems, manages to touch upon most genres of the period and to work in a good deal of information about the early literature and to raise comparative considerations from allied literatures, not only of Denmark and Norway but of France, Germany, and England as well. The genres that are treated, in some measure at least, are the metrical romance, the medieval lyric in its various forms, the lament against abuses of the times, the ballad (which makes its

appearance in more than one of the essays), vision literature, and chronicle, in all a fairly representative list of the poetic genres of the period. The approach in all six studies is historical rather than critical; the motive is history, and Hildeman relishes debating the niceties of genre and date.

"I marginalen till *Draumkvædet*," the last piece in the book, takes up something actually outside of the Swedish sphere, the well known Norwegian dream vision in ballad form, a unique traditional song that has called forth many commentaries. Hildeman's interest is centered upon the question "När skapades dikten?" In working his way toward an answer he reviews all the considerations that might possibly bear on the dating of the work, particularly the dependence on vision literature and the late ballad characteristics (first person narration, varying refrain, religious element, and minstrel incipit). The author wishes to shift the usual dating procedure from "How early might *Draumkvædet* have been composed?" to "When it is likely to have appeared?" He argues for a late date, postulating that the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are more likely than earlier ones.

Dating an oral tradition is a rash venture; after the nicest weighing of stylistic and external evidence one still cannot be sure. Louise Pound, writing in an English context, argued that religious ballads are among the oldest, that ballads in fact arose in a churchly environment, postulates that Scandinavian literary historians would have no patience with. Certainly Hildeman's arguments are persuasive, and one agrees with his refutation of Knut Liestøl's hypothesis that *Draumkvædet*, since it suggests influences of English vision literature, must belong to a period before slacking off of trade between Norway and Britain. We know too little about the medieval North to base specific literary judgments on general economic history.

In "*Erikskrönikan* och visan om Nyköpings gästabud" Hildeman airs the relationship between the famous chronicle concerning the fratricide perpetrated by King Birger at Nyköping in 1317 and the ballad about the same historical events. It is his contention that the ballad post-dates the chronicle, since it disregards historical fact and has reminiscences of the Norwegian *kämpavisa*, a ballad genre that was not known in Denmark or Sweden until about 1400. The ballad is found only in Danish and therefore naturally exhibits Danicisms; Hildeman on the strength of this argues that the ballad is a distant offshoot of the chronicle.

With the ballad genre one must always recognize the possibility of loss of records (Vedel's text, the oldest, is nearly three centuries after the events described); a Swedish ballad on the subject, if there existed one, would have become naturalized in Denmark when adopted there. It is recognized that *Erikskrönikan* owes something to the ballad tradition; that much Hildeman admits. But his judgment is based severely on extant texts, which leads him to a plausible but not necessarily convincing result that the ballad about the Nyköping murder was composed in Denmark from the chronicle, not directly, but by an imperfect recollection perhaps. The very nature of ballad "recomposition" would just as well account for the state of the Danish text and its departures from, first, the historical events, and, second, *Erikskrönikan*, to which the ballad is related.

"När kom kämpavisan till Sverige?" is a closely argued demonstration that the earliest *direct* evidence of the entry of the heroic ballad of west Scandinavia into Sweden is not c.1425 (as Sverker Ek has proposed) but 1386, the year the romance of

*Alexander* was turned into Swedish. The romance has motifs that are paralleled in the *kämpvisa*. The pushing back of the terminus a quo is a positive achievement; we are, of course, dealing with *record*, and the images used in *Alexander* would bespeak an established acquaintance with the genre on the part of its author.

In his study of *Trohetsvisan* Hildeman strives to remove the poem from the category of political song, since it is not tied to time, place, and event. He places Bishop Simonsson's lyric in the genre of moral complaint couched in allegorical language, consonant with the Latin *planctus* and German *Spruchdichtung*. The other study dealing with Swedish lyric poetry from the Middle Ages amplifies an interesting theory that half of those remaining to us owe their forms and inception not to Latin models, as was previously believed, but to German *Minnesang* and *Meistergesang*. The metrical and strophic analysis of a number of the lyrics proves his point that Sweden looked to Germany for poetic models in the fourteenth century, if not earlier.

Hildeman introduces his discussion of the chivalric romance of *Paris och Vienne* (or rather of the Swedish fragment of 208 verses) with the tempering observance that his presentation is essayistic. The few facts that can be established are all marshalled, the nature of the MS., its date of 1523, the scribe named Hans Spiegelberg. From here Hildeman constructs very convincingly and elaborately the theory, already suggested by Henrik Schück in 1926, that the romance was translated at the behest of Hans Brask, Roman Catholic Bishop of Linköping, whose energies and interests were in great part motivated by a desire for didactic literature; *Paris och Vienne* (certainly that portion which was translated) stresses this theme. He might have noted as supporting evidence for his hypothesis that the same romance struck another churchman, Jean de Pin, Bishop of Rieux, as instructive substance for young courtiers, for de Pin translated the romance into Latin in 1516 and had the work printed in Venice on the occasion of his stay there as ambassador for Antoine du Prat, Chancellor of France, for whose two sons the work was done. Hans Brask was not alone in his recognition of the edifying and instructive nature of this late but popular European romance.

We are given convincing demonstration that the verse form of *Paris och Vienne* does not imitate the popular ballads stylistically, as Rolf Pipping and Henrik Schück have both suggested, but is a borrowing of a verse form peculiar to *Danska rimkrönikan*, a work well known in Sweden in the sixteenth century. We are shown that *Rimkrönikan* is strophic, a matter not recognized before.

It is rarely one finds errors of print or transcription in the work. I shall cite one; in the quotation from Thomas Wright's *Political Poems and Songs* (p. 147 in Hildeman) the indentations of lines 3 and 4 are reversed (all the [e:] rhymes should be indented in the stanza to identify the rhyme pattern). In the same transcription the "norgle" should read "nor gle."

These six separate studies traverse well worked ground; Hildeman has the advantage of coming after Schück, Steffen, and others. He ably makes use of their best and himself gives good measure to boot. In an area of studies where guesswork and conjecture have played such a great part, where lacunae of texts and the absence of records draw the critic and historian onto unsafe ground like the will-o'-the-wisp, it is inevitable that a reader will have reservations. But it is to Hildeman's credit that he usually anticipates the protests that one might raise and forcefully argues his case in every instance. He manages to convey the excitement of discovery, of detection; the

style is easy and fresh; the presentation is orderly and well tempered, but sparked with queries and the ploys of the debater. *Medeltid på vers* must henceforth be reckoned with with in any discussion of Swedish medieval verse; it is, moreover, exemplary as a work of literary historianship.

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Alfvegren, Lars. *r-genitiv och are-komposition. Formhistorisk undersökning på grundval av svenska dialekter och ortnamn. Studier till en svensk ortnamnsallas*, 10. Skrifter utgivna av Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien. 32. Uppsala, 1958. Pp. 220+10 maps. 20 crowns.

This book, a doctoral dissertation included in a series of preparatory studies for a Swedish place-name atlas, deals with an interesting type of compound place-names in which there appears an intermediate element *-ar(e)-*, *-(e)r-*. This element is of diverse origin. In many cases it is an organic part of the first element of the compound, which may be a so-called *nomen agentis* or another noun ending in *-are*, e.g. *Fiskaretorpet* 'the Fisherman's cottage', *Källarekullen* 'the hillock by the cellar or storehouse.' In other cases the intermediate element may be derived from an old ending *-ar* in the genitive singular, after which a prop-vowel *-e-* often has been inserted, e.g. *Ålgårds* 'the Moose Ridge' (Old Swed. *algher*, m. 'a moose' gen. *alghiar*), *Bruarebacken* 'the Bride Hill or Slope' (Old Swed. *bråp*, f. 'a bride,' gen. *bråpar+e*). Several other origins occur more or less frequently.

Most remarkable and linguistically most interesting is a large group of place-names in which *-ar(e)-*, *-(e)r-* is a rather late secondary extension of the first element or an insertion between the two parts of the compound. Most frequent and geographically most widely distributed is a type in which the first element is of verbal nature, e.g. *Vilarestenen* 'the stone where people rest', *Dansarekullen* 'the hillock where people dance.' But especially in a comparatively small area around Gothenburg appears an inorganic *-are-* when the first element is a noun, e.g. *Stenarebäcken* 'the Stone Creek' (Old Swed. *stēn*, m. gen. *stēns*), *Hultareåker* 'the Grove Field' (Old Swed. *hult*, n. 'a grove,' gen. *hults*), *Uddareåker* 'the field on the point(s)' (Old Swed. *udde*, m. 'a point,' gen. *udda*), *Ladareåker* 'the Barn Field' (Old Swed. *lāpa*, f. 'a barn,' gen. *lāpu*), or even an adjective, e.g., *Bredareåker* 'the Wide Field' (Old Swed. *brjēp* 'wide'), *Vilaremossen* 'the White Bog' (Old Swed. *hvīter* 'white'). Alfvegren's treatise intends to establish the geographical distribution and to clarify the origin and interrelationship of these various types of compound place-names.

In the first chapter the author gives an account of compound dialect words and place-names in which the first element has the genitive ending *-ar* with or without an added *e* and also words in which *-ar* has developed into *-(e)r-*. Among the Swedish dialects only two small areas show compound appellatives that have such an intermediate syllable *-ar(e)-*, viz. one western (northern Halland and Västergötland) and one eastern (Gotland). In the western district it is first and foremost the word *brud*, f. 'a bride' that shows *-ar* (+added *-e*), e.g. *bruarefärd* 'a bridal procession', *bruarensäng* 'a nuptial bed.' Also in Gotland only a few compounds have preserved the old genitive ending *-ar*, e.g. *adarugg* 'an eider egg', *gasarugg* 'a goose egg.'

But in place-names we find a great number of compounds with the intermediate

-ar(e). Therefore the major part of the author's material consists of place-names. But there seems to be no principle or system according to which the place-names are adduced. The material is extremely heterogeneous, and the author makes little effort to systematize it. He lists without segregation or distinction 1) names in which the old genitive ending -ar remains without addition of -e; 2) names in which an -e has been added; 3) names in which -ar has developed into -er; 5) names in which ar has developed into r; 6) names in which -e has been added to -r; 7) names in which another genitive ending -s was added to the old one. Furthermore, it is difficult to see any reason for adducing some scattered medieval forms of lost names, when most of them are disregarded. Compound place-names in which the first element appeared in the medieval genitive ending -ar occurs all over Scandinavia, and it is accidental whether or not such forms are on record. A considerable number of pertinent names from northern Halland and Bohuslän are either unknown to the author or have, for unknown reasons, been neglected.

In earlier literature the intermediate syllable -are- has often been called "(primarily) West Swedish extension with -are." The author holds that this term is inappropriate. But his examples show that the addition of -e to the old genitive in -ar does occur chiefly in the West Swedish provinces. The author lists ca. 200 names with -are- from the western area, to which I add 35 more from northern Halland, but only ca. 30 from the rest of Sweden. The ratio between the number of names in the small western district and in the entire remainder of the country is ca. 9:1. And yet the author declines to call this type "primarily West Swedish."

In all these cases an old genitive ending in -ar is the origin of the modern forms. But the percentage figure in the western area is equally striking when it comes to names which now show -are- although there never was an -ar in the older language. Here we obviously have to do with an analogical extension. Such names in which the first member is a strong or weak noun, are treated in Chapter 2. There are in the small western area ca. 66 names with -are-, 21 of which are my own additions from northern Halland but unknown to the author, as compared to ca. 11 in the rest of Sweden. Thus the ratio is here 7:1. In arriving at these figures I have disregarded 7 names with *Trollare-* as the first element, since it most likely is of verbal nature, and consequently does not belong here. The exemplification shows the same confusion and lack of systematization as before. For instance, the names *Kampersberget*, *Kamperhög*, *Kampareberget* are not equivalent in regard to the intermediate syllable.

When the first member of the compounds is an adjective (Chapter 3), not one single example is to be found outside a very small western area around Gothenburg. The author records 44 such names, to which I add 16 more from northern Halland, unknown to him. Thus the ratio is here 60:0. Why should not this be called a "West Swedish extension?"

The author is not able to give a convincing explanation of the inorganic -are- in the many cases in which there was no original -ar. There must be something in the phonetic and/or morphological system in the western dialects that was favorable for the development of -are-. Actually, there are several factors that caused the intrusion of -are-, but the author did not discover the most important ones.

In the same chapter, the third, Alfvegren also treats compound place-names with a verbal first element. It is difficult to see, however, what an adjectival and verbal for-



mation have in common that calls for their being treated in the same chapter. As was said above, *are*-extension of adjectives occurs only in a very small western area, while verbal first elements are to be found all over Sweden. These two fundamentally different elements should have been treated in two separate chapters. As it is now, the reader is led to believe that the author considers them related to each other or has failed to see the difference.

The exemplification of verbal first elements is sketchy. Scattered instances are quoted at random from various sources. They do not show the geographical distribution of this type of names, which occurs many times more frequently in the West than elsewhere. The author has not understood the nature or the origin of these verbal elements. He makes, for instance, no distinction between active and gerundival meaning of the element, e.g. *Dånarebücken* 'the roaring brook' but *Vilareslenen* 'the stone by or on which one rests' (cf. *resting place*). These formations in *-are* are rather late. They correspond to present participles in *-ande* in earlier stages of the language. The present participles as first elements of compounds also have both active and gerundival meaning. In this case I agree with the author that the sometimes carelessly used term "West Swedish extension with *-are*" is inappropriate. In the first place this type is not exclusively or primarily West Swedish. In the second place *-are* is not an extension but a morphological element of the same nature as the participle ending *-ande*. This fact the author fails to see.

In Chapter 5 the author presents an interesting discussion of the genitive ending *-ur*, which appears in some Old Swedish texts and in some modern dialects and place-names. The last chapter offers an epitomizing survey of the results of the treatise. A short summary is given in English. An account of manuscripts and printed sources used and an index conclude the book.

The geographical distribution of the various types of place-names included in the vast material is graphically illustrated on ten maps, some of which are inaccurate because of incomplete material and uncertain or wrong interpretations.

In most cases the author accepts the interpretations of the place-names that have been given by others. When he suggests new explanations, he is not always successful. Some of his interpretations are definitely failures, e.g. the lengthy discussion of *Lackarebäck* and related names. In the opinion of this reviewer, Alfvegren's dissertation does not come up to the usually very high standard of Swedish doctoral theses.

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Seip, Didrik Arup. *Aktuelle spørsmål i norsk språkutvikling*. J. W. Cappelens forlag, Oslo, 1958. Pp. 66.

The title of this excellent booklet was aptly chosen. Important though many of the arguments and conclusions are also from the point of view of Nordicists, the easily readable, occasionally almost conversational exposition is slanted and highlighted in such a way as to bring out the salient aspects of Norwegian linguistic development in so far as they help elucidate and objectivize the discussion of problems regarding the elaboration of a written norm for the Norwegian *bokmål* or *riksmål* language.

One may say that Seip's monumental works on the history of Norwegian have in his homeland been of a primarily practical significance, particularly with reference



to the incessant linguistic debate that so often puzzles foreign observers. The book under review, which is in many respects to be regarded as a sequel to a work entitled *Omstridde spørsmål i norsk språkutvikling* (1952), is a deliberate contribution to this debate, and an admirable demonstration of the author's ability to use his wide scholarly experience for practical purposes, to turn the results of his assiduous study of old documents into well-supported advisory and recommendational statements in a topical discussion on ways and means of linguistic reformation.

Apart from the general introduction (pp. 5-9), the book is divided into four sections, the titles of which are: 1. "On Grammatical Gender in Norwegian" (pp. 10-49); 2. "a-Forms in Weak Verbs" (pp. 50-53); 3. "Strong Participle Forms with -i: *funni* etc." (pp. 54-55); 4. "Phonological and Orthographical Details" (pp. 56-66).

In the course of his discussion, Seip constantly makes reference to a work entitled *Framlegg til læreboknormal* 1957, a recently published set of recommendations for normalizing and standardizing the language to be used in Norwegian textbooks. It was collectively written by "Norsk språknemnd," 'The Norwegian Language Committee,' and in the last two years few publications have been so widely and so vehemently discussed by Norwegians as this. For a full understanding of the significance of Seip's book, it would have to be reviewed also with point-by-point reference to the work just cited, a task which would require much more space than is at my disposal. Consequently, only a few general remarks are made here.

The most important chapter is indubitably the one treating of grammatical gender in Norwegian, in which the author works out a rather complete synchronic and diachronic description of the gender systems in Norwegian rural and urban dialects. His main interest is devoted to the feminine gender, one of the main trouble-makers in current linguistic reform endeavors. He convincingly demonstrates, on the basis of pertinent population statistics, primary structural tendencies, idiomatic variability lists, testing of school-children's usage, historical documentation, etc., that the recommendations made by the Language Committee regarding the use of the feminine endings *-a* and *-en* are too dogmatic, because, in the author's words, '*Framlegg* has not sufficiently taken into consideration the Norwegian linguistic conditions that render it difficult to make the end vowel *-a* in some feminine words obligatory' (p. 48). The linguistic conditions referred to in the statement quoted here are listed under four rubrics (pp. 48-49), and the main conclusion of this chapter, and also of the others, are stated in terms of a plea for greater moderation, e.g. in making rules about obligatory use of *-a* or *-en* in feminines, i.e., a demand for greater freedom of individual choice, especially on the part of school-children writing Norwegian essays and the like.

In a hectic period of 'guided' linguistic transition such as exists in Norway at present, one can only welcome the author's sane and unbiased recommendations, and one may express the hope that one of these days at least the majority of the arguments that are used in the discussion of language reform will be as objective, as firmly based on factual and checkable data, as those advanced in this work by one of the greatest living Norwegian linguists.

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Free University of Berlin

Andersson, Otto. *Spel opp I spelemänner: Nils Andersson och spelmansrörelsen*. Nordiska Museet, Stockholm, 1958. Pp. 289. 20 crowns.

No one who has met Professor Otto Andersson escapes his infectious enthusiasm and his vital interest in folk music. For him it represents a way of life, and he is in no small way a contributor to the twentieth century's awakened interest in the subject, especially in the northern countries. Few other men have lived so intimately with the object of their scholarly studies, and he is thus admirably fitted to be the historian of "spelmansrörelsen" in Sweden.

*Spel opp I spelemänner* reflects Professor Andersson's vitality and enthusiasm. As its subtitle suggests, the book is a historical description of the movement as a whole with especial attention paid to the part played in its organization and development by Nils Andersson, the Swedish jurist. It is, moreover, divided into a foreword and sixteen chapters, the last of which is a statement of Professor Andersson's reflections upon the movement as well as some predictions as to its future. Unlike many such books, which are frequently written long after the fact, *Spel opp I spelemänner* brings its actors to life. The book is replete with pen and ink sketches, photographs, letters from people connected with the movement, musical and textual notation, and even price and wage lists illustrative of the problems, financial and otherwise, faced by any popular movement of this nature.

It would be pretentious to attempt to criticize this book. In the first place, there can be no doubt that Professor Andersson knows more about the subject than any other man now alive. In the second place, the book was obviously written with a popular audience in mind, though this popular appeal in no way obviates its value as a work of scholarship. It might be to the point, however, to indicate particular chapters which should be of especial interest to those concerned with such matters as the history of folksong collecting and the relationship of folksong and folkmusic to literature and men of letters.

Although *Spel opp I spelemänner* seldom strays far from Nils Andersson as a kind of moving force for the entire "spelmansrörelsen," it is chapter four, entitled "Nils Andersson som melodisamlare," which brings the picture into clear focus. Beginning with a brief biographical sketch, the chapter describes the developing nostalgia which led the noted jurist to his avocation. But more importantly it describes in detail his methods of collecting, his field trips, and his attitude toward the publication of music and text. Though a modern scholar, especially in America, might find objectionable Nils Andersson's desire to make the music which he collected known, he will find the notes which place each text in its cultural milieu very much in accord with modern practice. It is apparently easy, moreover, to separate Nils Andersson the editor from Nils Andersson the author: the former is aware of scholarly problems (e.g., the need to indicate the exact form of the collected texts); the latter was equally aware of the need to please a more-or-less general public.

Despite Nils Andersson's realization that a revival of folk music must have popular appeal, it seems doubtful that the Swedish renaissance could have been brought about by him alone. As collaborators he had, of course, the hundreds of "spelemänner" who would never have been known outside of their own parishes had it not been for his

realization of their importance and their musical genius. But he had other and more influential help as well, most notably in the persons of Anders Zorn and August Strindberg. That a nineteenth-century artist and a nineteenth-century author should develop an interest in the folkmusic of their own country is by no means surprising, but that they should make a major contribution to its perpetuation and to its popularization is more surprising. Both men, however, were interested in music, and their interest in such music was the basis for their meeting with Nils Andersson and their major contribution to the movement, a contribution described in detail by Professor Andersson in chapter XIII of his book, "Nils Andersson och August Strindberg." This chapter, replete as it is with personal letters, should be as of much interest to the students of Strindberg's plays as to the student of Swedish folkmusic.

Once having singled out two chapters for particular comment, there is a temptation, of course, to mention each of the others in some detail as well. And yet they cannot be effectively summarized without seeming unduly dry, for this book is a reflection of Professor Otto Andersson—a warm and vital book which needs to be read in its whole flesh, not dehydrated and then reconstituted with the thin waters of repetition. *Spel opp I spelemänner* does for the history of the "spelmansrörelsen" what Nils Andersson did for the movement itself; we may therefore hope that this book will bring the folk music movement again back to life, combining honest scholarship with popular appeal.

W. EDSON RICHMOND  
Indiana University

Koefoed, H. A. *Teach Yourself Danish*, The English Universities Press Ltd., London, 1958. Pp. 232. \$1.50.

Until just a few years ago there was a dearth of primers in the Danish language for English-speaking students. Recently, however, the situation has been improved considerably. In 1956 appeared Elias Bredsdorff's *Danish: An Elementary Grammar and Reader*; it was followed in 1958 by H. A. Koefoed's *Teach Yourself Danish*; and in the fall of this year Erling Norlev's *The Way to Danish*, which so far has been available only in mimeographed form, will be published by Munksgaard. Both Bredsdorff's and Koefoed's books are written primarily for British students of Danish, while Norlev's work addresses itself mainly to the American public.

*Teach Yourself Danish*, which in a commendable fashion fairly consistently stresses the modern colloquial and conversational language, is intended essentially for self study, and the author has been at pains to facilitate the work of the foreign student of Danish. Of special value to the self-taught student are the numerous cross references from the "Grammatical Notes" sections which follow all the Danish texts to the main "Grammar" chapter in Part III and the "Key to Exercises" which enables the student to check the accuracy of his translations of the English exercises that accompany each chapter. The grammatical information in Koefoed's book is clear, detailed, and accurate and the glossaries and idiomatic explanations very satisfactory.

In the Preface to his textbook Mr. Koefoed states that in *Teach Yourself Danish* stress has been laid not only on the vocabulary and grammar of the language but also on "introducing the student to aspects of Danish life and culture." In a rapid and elementary way (necessitated by its limited scope) *Teach Yourself Danish* does succeed in conveying to the foreign student a few glimpses of Danish culture and way of life.

Valuable in this respect are the chapters on "København," "Københavns omegn," "Den danske folkehøjskole," and "H. C. Andersen." The general excellence of the Danish readings is marred a little, however, by occasional lapses into the stodgy or unintentionally amusing style of so much nineteenth-century textbook material in foreign languages. In a Danish primer we should by now be able to get along without the stale stories about "Mols og molboerne" which are repeated from textbook to textbook with a piety worthy of a better cause; and it is doubtful that students are much advanced in their knowledge of Danish life and culture by reading "Fabler om dyr," another old acquaintance. In the chapter entitled "Dyrene" the writing at times recalls, not too happily, the style of certain Danish first-grade readers as in the following quaint sentences: "Bortset fra rotter og mus og nogle fugle, som f. eks. gråspurvvene, lever de fleste vilde dyr ude i naturen" and "Af de vilde fugle må man blandt andet nævne sangfuglene, der glæder menneskene med deres smukke sang." (p. 54). But fortunately this kind of sentence is rare in Koefoed's textbook, and on the whole his Danish reading material is made up of natural, modern prose.

Since H. A. Koefoed's book is much less expensive than Bredsdorff's Danish primer, *Teach Yourself Danish* will probably prove to be a serious rival to *Danish: An Elementary Grammar and Reader* in first-year language courses. *Teach Yourself Danish* could also be used as a review grammar in second-year courses, and its reading material might then be supplemented with selections from Koefoed's *An Anthology of Modern Danish Prose* (1956).

BØRGE GEDSØ MADSEN

University of California, Berkeley

Beck, Richard. *Í áttugana andinn leitar* (The Spirit Seeks Its Native Haunts), Bókaforlag Odds Björnssonar, Akureyri, Iceland, 9 June 1957. Pp. xxxviii+278.

The author of this book of speeches and essays scarcely needs an introduction to the readers of this journal. As the former president of the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study, as one-time member of the editorial staff of *Scandinavian Studies*, and as frequent contributor to this and other publications both scholarly and popular, he has earned an enviable reputation as an indefatigable interpreter of Icelandic literature and culture in general and of Icelandic poetry in particular. His interest in literature and poetry is natural, for he is not only an able critic as the book under review will attest, but also a creative poet, having published three volumes of verse: *Ljóðmál* (Winnipeg, 1929), *A Sheaf of Verses* (Winnipeg, 1954), and *Við ljóðalindir* (Akureyri, 1959).

The present book was published by subscription to honor Dr. Beck on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday. In addition to the list of 650 subscribers and a brief, but excellent biography of Richard Beck by Benjamin Kristjánsson, the book contains twenty-five delightful essays and speeches, most of them evaluations of recent Icelandic and Canadian-Icelandic writers. Pictures of the authors discussed add further interest and life to the book.

The title of the book is especially appropriate. It can scarcely be disputed that the spirit of Richard Beck, who is professor of Scandinavian and head of the department of modern and classical languages at the University of North Dakota, feels itself most at home in the realm of literature and especially that of his native country. On every

page the author evidences his interest in, his love for, and his profound knowledge of Icelandic literature. He ranges in this volume from a discussion of Jón Arason, the last of the Catholic bishops in Iceland and the national hero of the country who was beheaded four hundred and nine years ago, to literary artists still active in Iceland and Canada.

The essays are written in a lively and engaging style, completely free of pedantry and so-called scholarly devices. The author uses his exhaustive knowledge of Icelandic literature not to impress his readers with his erudition but to interpret in eloquent and idiomatic terms the message of the literary piece under discussion. The vibrant, keen, yet kindly, personality of Professor Beck is evident in every line. He never engages in carping criticism; that would be out of character for him. Rather he points out and emphasizes the stimulating, the excellent, and the praiseworthy.

Although not intended primarily for the specialist but rather for the interested layman, this book of essays will prove of great value to anyone who enjoys modern Icelandic literature. The author would be doing a meritorious service if he could find time to translate these stimulating essays, thereby making them available to those who would like to learn more about Icelandic literature, but who do not read Icelandic. This reviewer would especially like to see this done, for he is very much aware that good evaluations of Icelandic authors and their works would do much to encourage and stimulate an interest in Icelandic literature among English-speaking peoples.

LOFTUR BJARNASON

*U. S. Naval Postgraduate School  
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## NOTES

**WISCONSIN.** On leave for 1959-1960, Professor Einar Haugen left for Tokyo on July 10 to serve as one of three American consultants for the English Language Exploratory Committee of Japan. In January, he will go to Oslo by way of India, Egypt, Greece, and Italy. He will spend the second semester in Norway doing research on the language controversy.

During Professor Haugen's absence Harald Næss, lecturer at King's College, Durham University, is teaching courses in Norwegian language, literature, and history at Wisconsin. Mrs. Ingrid Camerini of Lund is teaching Swedish. During the second semester, Professor Richard Vowles of the University of Florida will give courses in Strindberg and modern Scandinavian literature.

**ST. OLAF.** Professor Kenneth Bjork, head of the Department of Political Science at St. Olaf and a member of the Executive Council of SASS, is doing research in Norway on a Fulbright Fellowship this year.

**ALLAN KASTRUP.** Teachers of Swedish and their students should find Allan Kastrup's *Digest of Sweden* (Pp. 64. The American-Swedish News Exchange, 630 Fifth Avenue, New York 20. Fifty cents) a highly useful addition to available text material. Published a few months ago, the book contains basic introductory information about almost every phase of Sweden and Swedish life. It is attractively illustrated.

**AUGUSTANA.** Dr. Erland Lagerroth of Stockholm is teaching Swedish at Augustana College this year. A graduate of the University of Lund who received his Ph. D. at the University of Stockholm in May, 1959, Dr. Lagerroth has published

articles on Faulkner and Sansom as well as on Lagerlöf. His doctoral dissertation, *Landscape in Selma Lagerlöf's "Gösta Berling's Saga" and "The Wonderful Adventures of Nils"* appeared last spring. He has, moreover, taught in Stockholm, headed study groups, lectured on Lagerlöf, and contributed to Swedish dailies. His wife, Ulla-Britta Holmström Lagerroth, is also a Lagerlöf scholar; she is the secretary of the Lagerlöf Society and co-editor of its publications.

**VANCOUVER.** A year ago Matthew M. Lindfors, former editor of *The Swedish Press* of Vancouver, British Columbia, introduced instruction in Swedish at Kitsilano High School there as part of the adult education program of the province. Fifty-five enrolled in the two sections. This fall he is offering both elementary and intermediate Swedish.

**AMENDMENTS.** In accordance with the decisions of the annual meetings in Berkeley and Rock Island three of the articles in the constitution have been revised. See below.

**ARTICLE 4.** "The officers shall be elected every other year for a two-year term as follows: A) The President and the Vice-President shall be elected by the majority of votes from the total membership of the Society which reach the Secretary-Treasurer within sixty days of the mailing of the ballots (which shall accompany the annual bills for dues in January of every other year, beginning in 1959), two names for each post having been recommended by a majority vote of the Executive Council. Those thus elected shall take office as of the close of the annual meeting of the year in which they are elected. The President and the Vice-President shall not

be nominated to succeed themselves in their respective offices. The Vice-President may be nominated for the presidency, but not the President for the vice-presidency. B) The Secretary-Treasurer and the Managing Editor shall be elected by a two-thirds majority of the Executive Council during the thirty days preceding the particular annual meeting. Those thus elected shall take office as of the close of the annual meeting of the year in which they are elected. With reference to A) and B), there shall be a nominating committee, consisting of the President, the Vice-President, and the two members of the Advisory Committee listed for one-year service. This committee shall make recommendations to the Executive Council. C) The Executive Council shall immediately after the particular meeting elect an Associate Managing Editor, who must be a person approved by the Managing Editor. The Associate Managing Editor shall take office immediately upon election."

**ARTICLE 9.** "Any person may become a member of the Society upon approval of the Secretary-Treasurer and upon payment of the dues. The membership shall be made up of such classes of members, paying such annual or single-payment membership dues, as the Executive Council, by two-thirds vote, from time to time shall determine. All members shall receive all publications of the Society. Regardless of class, each member shall have one vote. The membership, in the case of

annual members, shall run from January 1 to December 31 inclusive.

**ARTICLE 12.** Only the first sentence has been amended: "No officers shall receive salaries; but the Secretary-Treasurer, and he alone, shall be allowed to spend money for clerical help; this shall be in an amount to be authorized from time to time by a two-thirds majority of the Executive Council."

**PROPOSAL.** In a letter to the annual meeting Hedin Bronner proposes that "A congress of Scandinavian societies be arranged in the Middle West—in 1960 if possible—for the purpose of developing practical procedures for inter-society co-operation and support and of promoting proper recognition of Scandinavian course-credits. This congress should continue its work by establishing a Federation of American-Scandinavian Societies." See also Mr. Bronner's article, "A Centenary of Norwegian Studies in American Institutions of Learning," in the 1959 volume of *NASR*.

**UCLA.** The program in Scandinavian at UCLA has been augmented through the appointment of Dr. Kenneth G. Chapman as assistant professor of Scandinavian languages. The holder of degrees from Princeton, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, and a specialist in Norwegian and modern Icelandic linguistics and literature, Professor Chapman has studied in both Norway and Iceland.



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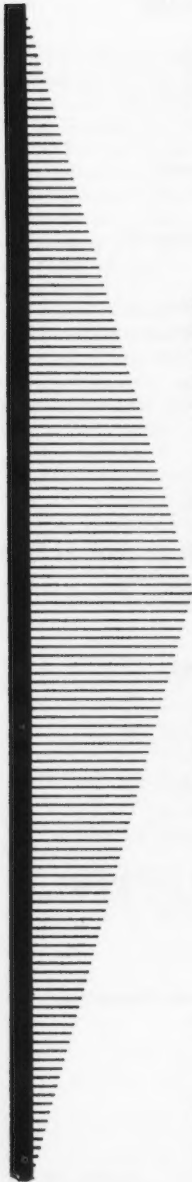
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Bertil Ejders *Skånes ortnamn: Albo härads*, Gleerup, Lund, 1959.—Gösta Franzens *Runö ortnamn*, Lundequist, Uppsala, 1959.—*Det fria och frivilliga bildningsarbetet i Sverige 1959*, Folkuniversitetets förlag, Stockholm, 1959.—Gunnar Hanssons *Diktaren och läsaren: Studier över diktlupplevelsen*, Bonnier, Stockholm, 1959.—Allan Kastrup's *Digest of Sweden*, American-Swedish News Exchange, New York, 1959.—H. A. Koefoed's *Teach Yourself Danish*, McKay, New York, 1959.—Kemp Malone's *Studies*

*in Heroic Legend and in Current Speech*, Rosenskilde & Bagger, Copenhagen, 1959.—William Sansom's *The Icicle and the Sun*, Reynal, New York, 1959.—Didrik Arup Seips *Om et norsk skriftlig grunnlag for Edda-diktningen eller deler av den*, Aschehoug, Oslo, 1959.—Sven Stolpes *Från stoicism till mystik. Studier i Drottning Kristinas maximer*, Bonnier, Stockholm, 1959.—Einar Ól. Sveinsson's *Dating the Icelandic Sagas: An Essay in Method*, Viking Society, London, 1959.

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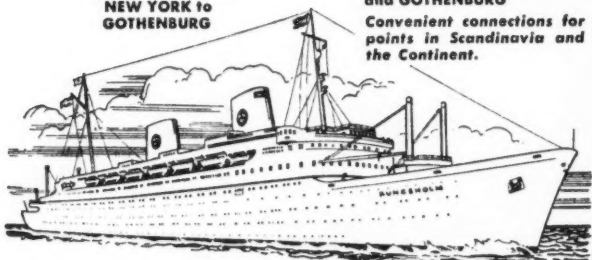
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